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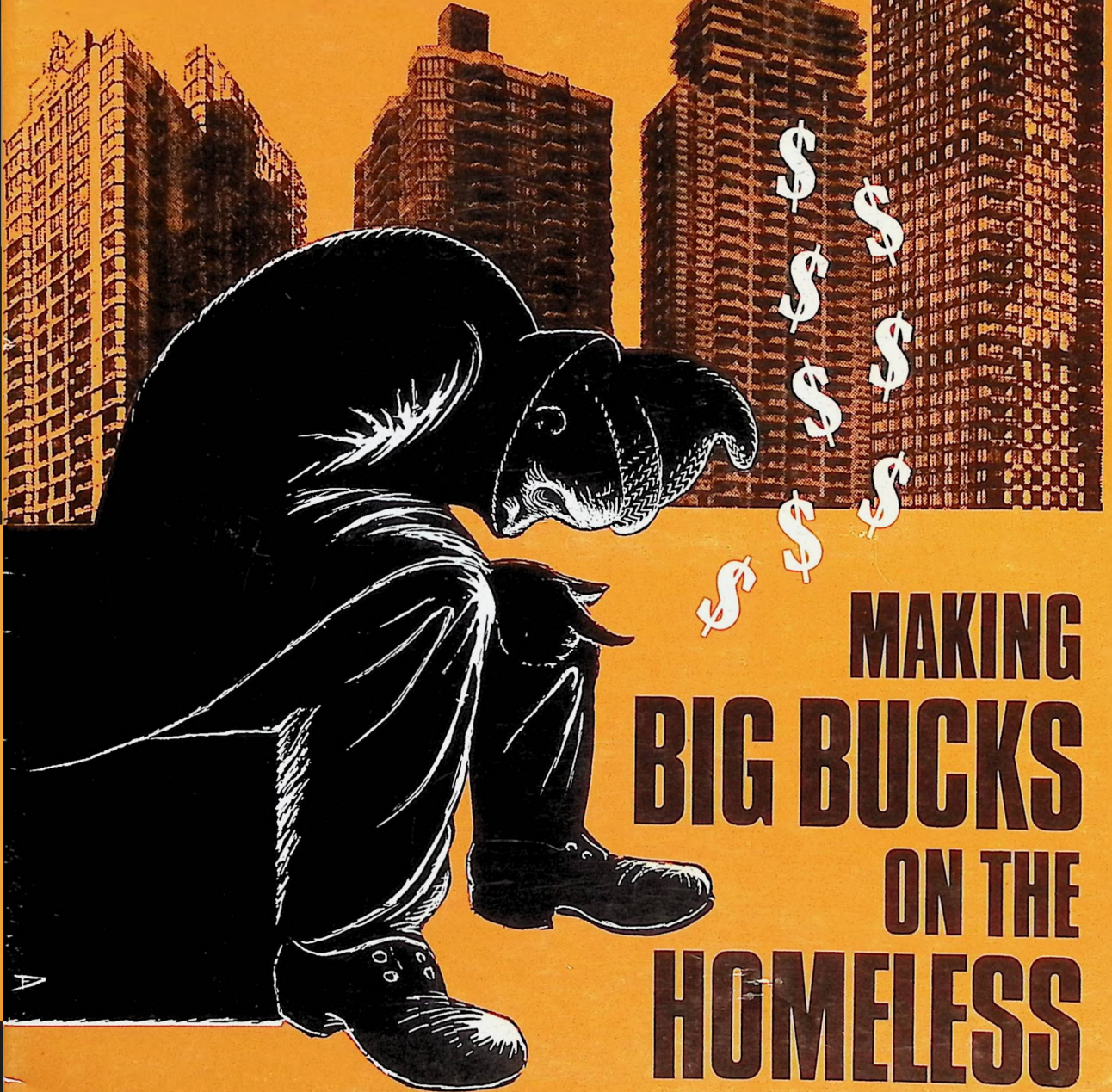
JOURNAL OF MARXIST THOUGHT
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SETTING STRAIGHT THE 70-YEAR RECORD
Gus Hall

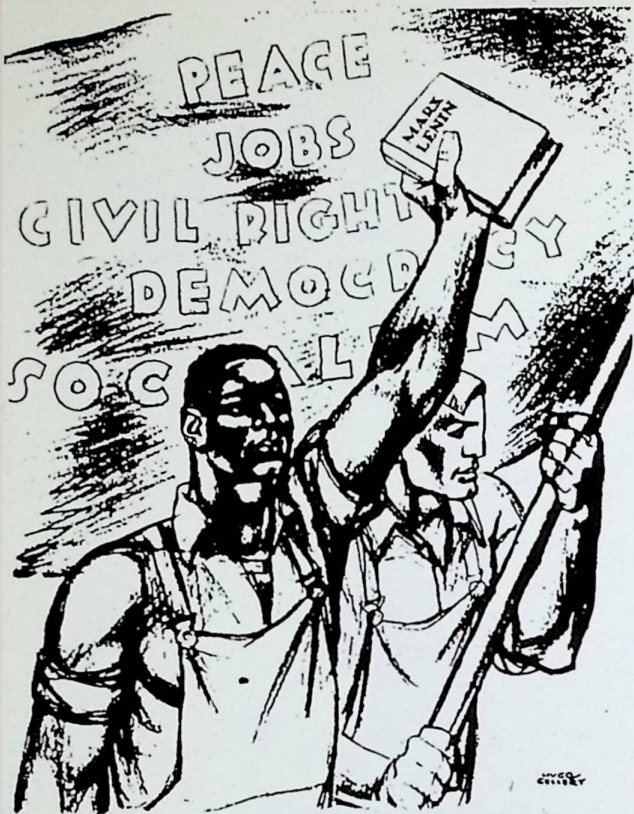
MEETING THE CRISIS IN
PUBLIC EDUCATION

National Teachers' Commission, CPUSA

THE WINDS BLOW LEFT IN LABOR
George Meyers



**MAKING
BIG BUCKS
ON THE
HOMELESS**



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Celebrating his birthday

On January 18th the people of our country will celebrate the birth and life of Dr. Martin Luther King. It will be a day of joy, and struggle. And that is how it should be.

Dr. King's birthday is enshrined in our country because he cared about, and fought for, everyday people. And because everyday people cared about, and fought to preserve, his legacy.

And with good cause. He was a fighter for equality and democracy, an activist for peace, an advocate of workingclass unity. He argued that the rights of the people must come before the privileges of the wealthy.

Martin Luther King is a symbol of what our nation is yet to become and how it will become. When people of our nation deal a final blow to the "Irangaters" and "Watergaters" of our nation, Martin Luther King's memory will be emblazoned on our shields.

Martin Luther King was not merely an advocate of change; he was its organizer and tactician. He taught that there is no force more powerful than Black-labor unity.

King concluded:

White and Negro workers have mutual aspirations for a fairer share of the products of our industries and farms. Both seek job security, old-age security, health and welfare protection. The organized labor movement which has contributed so much to the economic security and well being of millions, must concentrate its powerful forces on bringing economic emancipation to white and Negro by organizing them together in social equality.

For advancing this concept he earned the undying hatred of extreme reaction. Today, 20 years after his murder, the ultra-Right still conspires to bury his ideas, only now using the censor's scissors instead of an assassin's gun.

Instead of popularizing the writings and teachings of Dr. Luther King, the huge corporations, which make super-profits from



discrimination, serve up a sanitized version of his life and work.

Even the slogan "Living the Dream" of the official King Holiday Commission leads to the conclusion that the struggle, even the little that is taught about it, is over, and the responsibility for bettering the conditions of the people rests with the victims who must learn to "live" in the "proper" way.

Clearly, the very struggle that gave rise to Martin Luther King, and then went on to make his birthday a national holiday must now do battle over how his birthday should be marked.

This year Martin Luther King Day will also be celebrated with demonstrations against apartheid, for jobs, housing and against racism. In many states the trade unions are utilizing the day to popularize the rights of the labor movement. That is how it should be.

Martin Luther King's life is not past history. Its lessons are a guide for today, and a summons to complete his unfinished agenda—equality in all aspects of life, defense of labor's rights, guaranteeing the benefits of our Constitution for all our people and world peace.

By fighting to complete Dr. King's agenda, we also secure his true place in history.

Now that the summit is over

Now that the U.S.-USSR summit is over, people in both countries will contemplate where the peace process goes from here. With possibilities for new agreements in Moscow early next year, there is clearly a lot to do.

For the first time in history, the Soviet Union and the United States have agreed to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons, no small accomplishment considering the many sharp moments of confrontation that have arisen in the past seven years.

The elimination from Europe of short and medium range missiles with their fatal flight time of no more than six minutes, has lengthened the delicate nuclear fuse on which the world's fate so dangerously hangs.

Some have wondered if the agreement was more of a victory for one side or the other. In our view it was a victory for humanity—the same broad spectrum of living and breathing people whose marches and protests brought the agreement into being.

It is a tribute to the initiatives of the Soviet Union which, despite provocations by the Right-wing here in the U.S., worked to find a path of compromise with the administration. It is, at last, a sensible step by the Reagan Administration, which, after years of inflammatory rhetoric, finally parted with the extreme Right to ease world tensions.

If anyone lost out as a result of the agreement, it was those whose stock-in-trade is the cold war, with its myth of a Soviet threat: the profiteer merchants of death in the military-monopoly complex and the far Right politicians with whom they are allied.

Unfortunately, the doomsday profiteers do not give up easily. Defeated by success at the summit, they are now trying to scuttle the treaty with nullifying amendments in the Senate ratification process. Fronting this drive is the lie that the treaty leaves Western Europe defenseless

against superior conventional forces, a lie thoroughly exposed by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

Nevertheless, facts do not automatically bring about sensible reactions. The coming vote in the Senate could result in a defeat if the peace movement does not take determined action.

There are many lessons to be learned from the successful campaign for an INF agreement. Chief among them is the power of the unity of the world's peace forces.

Since anti-Sovietism has always been the critical weapon in the splitters' arsenal, it is especially important to work for a better understanding of the Soviet Union's policies.

The "logic" involved in the pro-war campaign is increasingly clear for all to see. To have an arms race you must have international tension. For this you must have an enemy.

Fear and hatred of the Soviet Union is the ideological foundation for the arms race. In the age of nuclear weapons, this hatred can have but one eventual outcome: destruction of all of humanity. Our world is divided between two competing social systems. Unless we learn to compete without arms, no system will exist.

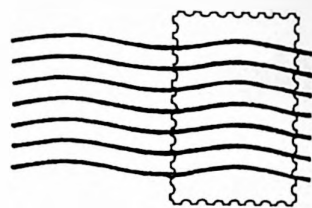
The Soviet Union has accepted this basic truth. It has placed before the world an alternative agenda for cooperation and mutual, equal security for all nations.

The world now stands at a threshold. The possibility of halving all long range nuclear weapons is here.

First, however, the INF agreement must be ratified. The INF treaty is not only a first step—it is a *necessary step* on the road to nuclear disarmament. The Senate must act quickly to ratify the agreement without crippling changes! □

Letters

Political Affairs
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RULING CLASS DIVISIONS

I want to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a question that has been disturbing me regarding the assessment of the U.S. ruling class. Implicit in the pre-convention draft document and in the main convention report to the 24th National Convention of the CPUSA is the recognition of a split in the country's ruling class. But this was neither emphasized nor spelled out clearly and emphatically.

Such an emphasis becomes significant when all people's unity must be forged and mobilized for action. One factor we encounter in mass work is the sense of defeatism, which can immobilize people. This sense of defeatism is fed, among other things by a perception that the ruling class, is formidable, cohesive and united. With such a perception how can we succeed in mobilizing the masses into struggle? Perhaps that explains why so many eligible voters do not participate in the voting process.

By not identifying the weakness of the ruling class, the split within its ranks, we are at a disadvantage in overcoming defeatism among masses. Too often that is half the battle.

I would appreciate reading

comments to this thought in the pages of the *Political Affairs*.

B.C., Bronx, NY

MINeworkers' STRUGGLE

I am 77 years old. Most of those years I was a coal miner. I joined the union when I was 22 years old. I have never scabbed a day since.

I have been retired for some time, as a result of bad health. But I can still pass out pro-labor literature. I have many young friends, some of which have suffered cuts in their incomes by Koroger Company's food stores. Some of these young folds are very bitter. If I had suitable pro-labor literature, I would give it to some of them and mail it to others I know, but can't reach in person. I will pay the cost of mailing it to them. I think *Political Affairs* is excellent to circulate.

I am now making contributions each month to help support the UMWA in January of 1988 when we expect a strike—perhaps a long one. In any case, I would appreciate any help P.A. can give us.

E.R.B., Charleston, WV

THANK YOU . . . BUT

I want to thank P.A. for its November issue on the 70th anniversary of the Soviet

Revolution. Your issue helped me to understand more deeply the developments in the Soviet Union.

I especially liked the article by Yegor Ligachov. I also liked the other articles. I think you can see, however, that a "but" is coming.

My "but" is this. There are a lot of issues about *Perestroika* that we need to discuss in the U.S.—issues that no Soviet citizen can tell us. On the contrary, Ligachov would probably like to read what U.S. Communists think about these aspects of the question.

For example, how will *Perestroika* affect the political and economic developments in the U.S.? Will there be a new basis for trade? How will advances in Soviet technology affect the prospects for Star Wars? Why are U.S. citizens reacting to *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* in the way they do? What does it mean and reflect? How does *Glasnost* differ from the expansion of bourgeois democracy? etc.

We are living in very exciting times. I look forward to P.A. helping me to understand just how exciting and wonderous it really is. Thank you for doing the job you already are doing.

R.B., Bklyn, NY

70 Years of Socialism Setting the Record Straight

GUS HALL

A 70th anniversary is an important moment in the life of anyone or anything. But it is of special significance to a socio-economic system that was not supposed to survive its first anniversary.

According to the corporate pundits, socialism was not a workable system. During its 70 years there have been millions of books, articles, studies, forums, films, etc., all predicting the failure or demise of socialism. Some based their predictions on the premise that socialism as a system can not work, others on the premise that it can not survive because of Russia's backwardness.

Celebration and Evaluation

The working class, the peasants and intellectuals, the people, the Communists and Lenin ignored the warnings, the predictions and proclamations of doom and proceeded to do the impossible. They took over a feudal country without an industrial base, backward in agriculture and technology. Within 70 years they have transformed this vast land into one of the most advanced nations in the world—industrially, economically, technologically and culturally. They have done this in spite of two of the most devastating wars that any country has ever endured.

Thus, the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution was a celebration of the victories and advances. It became an occasion for many events. One of the most significant was a conference of representatives of Communist and Social Democratic Parties.

Seventy years ago the working class and international socialist movement split into two world movements. The two-day Moscow con-

Speech of Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA, at the 70th Anniversary Jubilee of the Great October Revolution, Moscow, November 2, 1987.

ference (November 4-5) was the most significant recent step towards working class, left and socialist unity in action.

It was a further step in the process whereby Communists and Social Democrats are working together in the trade union movement, in the anti-imperialist and peace movements, in the struggle to end the nuclear arms race.

The highlight of the gala celebration of the 70th anniversary of the birth of the first socialist state was the report delivered by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The report is a very unusual document. It is an honest, open examination of the positives and negatives of the 70 years. It is an assessment in depth of the different stages in the building of socialism and the contributions and weaknesses of the leading personalities of each stage. Each period and the role of the leaders of each period are examined in the framework of the specific objective conditions and forces of each period.

The Forced March Period

In dealing with the 15 years after Lenin, which were the first 15 years of Stalin's leadership, the report sets the framework as follows:

History set the new system a rigid ultimatum: either it would, in the shortest possible time, build its own socio-economic and technical basis and survive, giving the world the first example of a society of justice, or fadeout and remain in the memory of time, at best, as a heroic but unsuccessful experiment.

This clearly sets the stage. The conditions of that period called for a "forced march," for total mobilization, for short cuts, extreme sacrifices, and yes, putting off establishing democratic methods.

The report continues,

. . . the twenties and thirties, occupied a special place in the history of the Soviet state. Radical social changes were carried out in some fifteen years. An incredible lot was squeezed into that period—both from the point of view of search for optimum variants of socialist construction and from the point of view of what was really achieved in building the foundations of the new society. Those were years of hard work to the limits of human endurance, of sharp and multifarious struggle, industrialization, collectivisation, the cultural revolution, strengthening of the multinational state, consolidation of the Soviet Union's international positions, new forms of managing the economy and all social affairs—all this and more occurred within that period. . .

It was an exploit on a historic scale and of historic significance. Under the leadership of the Party, of its Central Committee, a heavy industry, including engineering, a defense industry and a chemical industry abreast of the times, were built in short order, practically from scratch, and the General Plan for the Electrification of Russia was completed.

History, Leaders and Methods

This historic framework and Stalin's leadership have to be placed in this context. The unique development of the first years of socialism influenced the leadership and the methods. It also influenced the kind of leadership the people expected. The revolution and the people demanded—yes, demanded—fast results. The mood was to remove all obstacles and treat all opposition harshly.

Speaking about some of the leading cadre, the report continues,

Their petty-bourgeois nature took the upper hand in the case of some authoritative leaders. They took a factional stance. This agitated the Party organizations, distracted them from vital affairs and interfered with their work. The leaders in question continued to provoke a split even after the vast majority in the Party saw that their views were contrary to Lenin's ideas and plans and that their proposals were erroneous and could push the country off the correct course.

This applies first of all to Leon Trotsky, who had, after Lenin's death, displayed excessive preten-

sions to top leadership in the Party, thus fully confirming Lenin's opinion of him as an excessively self-assured politician who always vacillated and cheated. Trotsky and the Trotskyites negated the possibility of building socialism in conditions of capitalist encirclement.

In foreign policy they gave priority to export of revolution, and in home policy to tightening the screws on the peasants; to the city, exploiting the countryside; and to administrative and military fiat in running society. Trotskyism was a political current whose ideologists took cover behind leftist pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric and who, in effect, assumed a defeatist posture. This was essentially an attack on Leninism all down the line. The matter practically concerned the future of socialism in our country, the fate of the revolution.

In the circumstances, it was essential to disprove Trotskyism before the whole people and its anti-socialist essence. In short, the Party's leading nucleus headed by Joseph Stalin had safeguarded Leninism in an ideological struggle. It defined the strategy and tactics in the initial stage of socialist construction with its political course being approved by most members of the Party and most working people. An important part in defeating Trotskyism ideologically was played by Nikolai Bukharin, Felix Dzerzhinsky, Sergei Kirov, Grigori Ordzhonikidze, Jan Rudzutak, and others.

The Soviet People's Heroism

Speaking about the role of the Soviet people, the report continues,

Though they were not sufficiently literate, their class instinct told them that they were participating in a momentous and unprecedented undertaking.

It is our duty and the duty of those who will follow us to remember this exploit of our fathers and grandfathers. Everyone must know that their labor and their selfless dedication were not in vain. They had endured everything that fell to their lot, and made a grand contribution to the consolidation of the gains of the October Revolution, to laying the foundations of the strength that enabled them to safeguard the Motherland from a deadly peril, to save socialism for the future for all of us.

This connects the question of the Second World War and fascism. It explains that it was possible to defeat the fascist hordes precisely because of the past, because of what had been achieved during the forced march period.

At the same time, the period under review also saw some losses. They were in a definite sense connected with the successes I have just referred to. People had begun to believe in the universal effectiveness of rigid centralization, that the methods of command were the shortest and best way of resolving any and all problems.

Genesis of the Command Style

In other words, the people got used to the idea of the command style of leadership and rigid centralization as the shortest and best way to advance the socialist system.

Gorbachev said,

This had an effect on the attitude towards people, towards their conditions of life. A Party and government leadership system of administrative command emerged in the country, and red tape gained strength, even though Lenin had warned about its danger in his days. And a corresponding structure of administration and planning began to take shape.

In industry—given its scale at the time, when literally all the main components of the industrial edifice were conspicuous—such methods, such a system of management generally produced results. Yet at that time methods dictated by the period of the struggle with the hostile resistance of the exploiter classes were being mechanically transferred to the period of peaceful socialist construction, when conditions had changed cardinally. An atmosphere of intolerance, hostility, and suspicion was created in the country.

As time went on, this political practice gained in scale, and was backed up by the erroneous "theory" of an aggravation of the class struggle in the course of socialist construction.

Quite obviously it was the absence of a proper level of democratization in Soviet society that made possible the personality cult, the violations of legality, the wanton repressive measures of the thirties.

I am putting things bluntly, those were real crimes stemming from an abuse of power. Many

thousands of people inside and outside the Party were subjected to wholesale repressive measures.

This is in essence how the report deals with this period. It is clear that there have been shortcomings in dealing with history in the past. Thus, it was necessary to take the developments of 70 years of socialism and place them in the proper context. This way of treating with history is the correct Marxist-Leninist way.

Setting the Record Straight

The weaknesses and crimes were not committed by evil people, separated from the objective developments. It is always important to put events into correct historic perspective. The report gives credit where credit was due and rejects and condemns that which must be condemned.

While explaining and placing all questions in their correct historic perspective, the report does not in any way excuse or condone the crimes that were committed in the name of the "forced march" or in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The report makes clear why it was possible for individuals like Bukharin to play a positive role in one period and a negative role in another.

It was a historic necessity to defeat the petty bourgeois political currents in the first years of the building of socialism. If Trotskyism had prevailed, socialism would have become bogged down in the petty-bourgeois swamp of opportunism. The working class would have been pushed to the sidelines.

Of course the rejection of Trotskyism was not the end of petty bourgeois opportunism, of political currents that hide their defeatist right wing policies behind pseudo-revolutionary phrasemongering.

Most of the small sects that come and go do not use the label of Trotskyism because it has become discredited. Today, most try to include the words "Communist," or "Marxist-Leninist" in their name to gain acceptance. Because anti-Sovietism has declined, most of the pseudo-left sects have dropped their open anti-Sovietism. But most of these groups continue to be anti-

working class and anti-Communist.

There are no models for socialism. But there are some important lessons in the 70-year struggle for socialism in the Soviet Union, including for those who are confused about the role of the pseudo-left groups.

The anti-working class and anti-Communist positions of the phony left are concessions to monopoly capital. Their tactics serve the purpose of splitting and downgrading the working class. Their aim is to create divisions between the working class and the racially and nationally oppressed.

Anti-communism has always been the mainstay of the Trotskyite and other phony left groups. The anti-communism of the ultra-right

comes from the right flank. The same anti-communism of the left comes from the left flank. It does not matter from which direction it comes. It serves the same purpose, the same class, monopoly capital.

Thus, although there are no strict models, there are important conclusions and lessons we must draw from this examination for the class struggle and working class movements in the United States. In this, the new light cast on history and our understanding of it and the important lessons, lies the significance of Mikhail Gorbachev's penetrating analysis of the stages in the process of building a new society in the first country of socialism. □

This Moment Calls for Unity

GUS HALL

Comrades: I know we are not wasting time by applauding speeches or events. But, as you have heard, one of the more extreme warhawks who has been the main obstacle to the nuclear arms agreement—Secretary of War Weinberger—has decided to resign. That is good news. I suppose he thought Washington was not big enough for both him and Comrade Gorbachev. He resigned because he can not accept the break in the nuclear arms race and because Congress is going to cut the war and Star Wars budget. More than many, Weinberger understands that the accord will be the break—that it will create its own inner dynamics, that it will greatly add to the peace momentum.

The conveners of this informal, free-for-all gathering showed great confidence in us when they said we could speak about anything we want to, as long as it doesn't take longer than ten minutes. Maybe we should have made the rule of ten minutes more binding. So, with that in mind, I will speak about three issues briefly.

Speech delivered by Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA, at a world conference of Communist, Socialist and Workers' parties, Moscow, November 4 and 5, 1987.

I Watching the stock market crash from the ramparts of Wall Street, it appears more serious. The aftershocks will have a serious effect on all economic developments worldwide.

First and foremost, the crash is directly the result of supply-side, pump-priming, credit-card Reaganomics, which depends increasingly on borrowing and ever bigger artificial stimulants.

The 400 billion dollar trade deficit and a two and a half trillion dollar federal debt became an intolerably crushing weight on the overall economy. Thus, the U.S. economy is basically unhealthy and unsound.

The storms that are battering the stock market are forerunners of things to come, because the same economic factors that brought on the tumbling markets are also the factors that are moving the capitalist world economies toward a new cyclical crisis. And, just in the last days, there is the free fall of the dollar which signals the beginning of a serious financial crisis. Against the German mark, the dollar is now the lowest in history.

Because the center of the quake was on Wall Street, the aftershocks are having the greatest impact on the United States.

The dead fall on the stock market is putting a brake on capital investments. It is further slowing down economic growth, which will result in increasing longterm unemployment.

The cutoff of capital investments will have a special negative effect on the newer, high-technology industries which have thrived and depended for expansion capital on the high-flying stock market.

As significant as the economic effects are, most likely, the political effects will have an even greater impact. The crisis of confidence and the pessimism that is across the board and spreading will tend to further hold back any correction.

The shocks and tremors are a reminder for those who have forgotten that the basic laws of capitalist development have not withered away, that there are new developments but they have not replaced the fundamental laws which continue to influence all capitalist developments.

The shocks should serve as a reminder that state monopoly capitalism can influence and even postpone crises; but it can not resolve the basic inherent contradictions that do inevitably break out in crises. The worldwide crash and panic has shaken up many economists, including some Marxists, who have become enamored with the so-called "Reagan revolution".

II • This is one of those moments in history when the specific self-interests of classes, social systems and countries tend to run along parallel lines. The world antifascist struggle in the 1930s was also such a moment.

However, the different self-interests did not melt into a single current, or an identical common interest. They came together into the antifascist movement for their special self-interest along parallel lines. And, as we know, that was a very important factor in the defeat of fascism.

Today, the threat of world nuclear extinc-

tion has again created such a moment, a moment in which the common self-interest of all humanity tends to coincide with the specific interests of different sectors. It is most important to take this into consideration as a basis for the mobilization of all-people's unity in the struggle to end the nuclear arms race.

However, it is also important to recognize that the overall interests can not be superimposed or substituted for all the other problems the people face. The challenge, therefore, is to synchronize the overall interests with the specific interests.

As true as it is, the argument that there will be nothing and no one left to fight over anything if the world goes up in nuclear smoke, does not by itself answer the dilemma of millions who are hungry, who are oppressed, who are homeless and workers in deep poverty. They have difficulty in seeing the overall nuclear danger because of the stark realities they must deal with daily.

To preserve life and nature it is necessary to unite to put an end to the madness of the nuclear arms race.

But to make life worth preserving, it is necessary to unite to fight against imperialism, to fight for the establishment of a new international economic order, to cancel the debts of the developing countries, to fight against the fascist military regimes. Placed correctly, that does not weaken the overall struggle to preserve life on this planet. Just the opposite, it gives the all peoples' struggle a more stable basis.

The class struggle is not something that can be turned on or off. The fact is that even the sections of monopoly capital who are concerned about the threat to all living things on this earth, are not yet prepared to give up their drive for maximum profits. This means we have to take this fact into our tactical approach.

The task of the peace majority leadership in the United States, for instance, is to find the ways and issues that minimize the contradictions and maximize the issues that make unity possible. Without such an approach, both the maximum mobilization and the struggle to put an end to the nuclear arms race and policies of

imperialist aggression will suffer.

It is also important to keep in mind that even the sectors of monopoly capital that give their support to nuclear disarmament—and there many of them—do not give up their ideology. So the ideological struggle must go on.

In this period, unity of all the people's forces has acquired a new power. The dynamics of unity have emerged as the main function of tactics—unity of the new world peace majority, unity of the working class, unity of the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces, unity of the world communist movement, have become historic necessities.

III. It is always nice to get together to chat and exchange experiences, but there are times when the workingclass parties must get together and, on the basis of their exchanges, coordinate tactics, compare policies and assessments, and yes, help and encourage each other.

There are times when unity of action has become an historic necessity. In its own class interest, the working class must unite in the struggle against racism. In its own class interest, the working class needs unity to deal with the effects of the new technology.

Just as the people's movements and the trade unions need a new level of unity, so the workingclass parties need a new level of unity. There is no need for Communist and workingclass parties to follow the pattern of the negotiations between some countries, each in their own separate rooms with a go-between. In the present moment, workingclass internationalism must mean more than sending birthday cards to each other. It must be unity in action, including communist unity in action.

The world needs a new level of unity to end U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. Unity is necessary to remove the regimes of South Africa and Chile. Today's world demands a new level of workingclass internationalism and world communist unity. Internationalism must be a live active force. Unity in struggle is the very essence of internationalism.

There can be no real unity in struggle without meetings and conferences. Without getting together, there can be no worldwide initiatives in struggle. The weaknesses of the Communist International are no excuse. For the solution of today's problems, world communist unity is a historic necessity.

Not to take steps toward closer working relationships between parties is, in a sense, self-redbaiting.

As long as I am now one of the older cadre, let me be so bold as to say something that I have wanted to say for a long time to you comrades who are from countries where there is more than one communist party— In the interest of directing our full force to the effort to save the human race from a nuclear disaster, in the interest of workingclass unity, in the name of advancing human progress—put aside all subjectivity, discuss-out all your political differences, and get together. In any collective, everyone must give up something. And, speaking from a selfish point of view, your splits weaken the struggle against U.S. imperialism. In the case of communist parties, two is less than one.

And again, what this moment calls for—more than anything else—is unity in struggle, unity in action. □



HOMELESSNESS: THE CRISIS UNCONFINED

Maurice Jackson

For millions in the United States, this is more than a winter of discontent. Unlike Shakespeare's King Richard, they have no castles to return to. They are the ever-growing numbers of the homeless. Just as a ship's captain must instruct the crew to trim ship, furl sails and prepare for a predicted storm, one might expect the nation's leader to take measures so that the oncoming brutal winter finds no human beings living on the streets at the mercy of the elements.

Although by all accounts, there are up to 25 percent more homeless this winter than last, the Reagan Administration has done nothing to guarantee shelter, a most basic right, for millions. This right is becoming yet another of "American democracy's" pipe dreams. In a study by M.I.T. Professor Phillip L. Clay, commissioned by the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation,¹ if present trends continue, there will be by the year 2003, 18.7 million homeless people—enough to populate the combined cities of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Washington, Atlanta and Philadelphia.

According to this study, in the coming 17-year period, available low-income housing units (classified as renting for \$325 a month or less) will shrink from 12.9 million to 9.4 million. Indeed, federal housing subsidies in the Reagan years have shrunk from \$32 billion in 1981 to \$9.5 billion in 1986.

Each year since Reagan took office 500,000 units have been wiped out by condominium conversion, abandonment, demolition, and landlord arson. Landlords, to avoid taxes, often find it more profitable to let buildings rot, or they force tenants out by providing no heat or maintenance.

The *Washington Post* reported:

. . . for tax purposes, owners of buildings are allowed to state that their building is getting less valuable as

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time passes even though, in reality, it is usually getting more valuable, and they then deduct from their taxes the amount of the decrease each year. And, when the property is sold, 60 per cent of the gain is excluded from federal taxes.²

Another study³ showed that in the year 2040, the average price for a house will have risen from \$85,000 in 1985, to more than \$200,000.

Not many years ago, the concept of the homeless was to many in the United States what they saw in movie scenes of Bowery "derelicts" or "Boxcar Willie" jumping trains. In reality, the crisis of homelessness has been building for decades.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development hired slick Harvard researchers to make a "scientific" study⁴ which concluded that there are only 350,000 homeless in the U.S. It showed that the full total, due to the "hidden homeless" factor, is anyone's guess. For example, in New York City, there are an estimated 100,000 families, including 200,000 children, who sleep each night at the homes of family or friends. The *New York Times*⁵ calls these families "couch people" who are unable to find or afford permanent residence. It is known that there are at least 3 million homeless nationally, possibly up to 5 million, and one-third of these are children.

WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

As the number of homeless continues to grow, many ask "who are they?" They are distinguishable from the millions of poor people only by their homelessness. They are the jobless PATCO workers whom Reagan fired and black-listed; they are the millions of unemployed who have no benefits; they come from the over 7 million people who work at the minimum wage which, for a family of three, puts them below the poverty level; they are the millions on the now ten-year-plus waiting lists for public hous-

ing; they are refugees from U.S. sponsored and sustained repression in El Salvador and Haiti and those whom Reagan has lured here from Cuba and Indochina with false promises and closed hands.

According to the Housing Assistance Council, they are:

in southeastern Georgia, living in small towns, whose homes have been condemned as substandard and who had no relocation assistance; in West Virginia, mobile park tenants who were unemployed and not able to continue paying their rent; in Humboldt County, California, families living in cars and under bridges; and, in southwestern New Mexico, where there is only the civilian defense shelter in the local courthouse for the growing number of newly unemployed who face homelessness due to foreclosures.⁶

The homeless are the millions who live in small towns, in abandoned railway cars; they are the foreclosed families and the family farmers who have lost their land. They are the many who live in the putrid welfare hotels of New York City at a cost of \$69,000 a year for a family of three or, in Washington, DC, which pays \$2,400 a month for a family of four in one room without kitchen appliances.

They are the nation's veterans, who went away to war for what they thought was right and noble. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*:

The L.A. County Division of the homeless which deals exclusively with veterans, estimates that there are between 35,000 and 50,000 homeless people in the streets of L.A. . . . about 50 percent are veterans and 50 percent of them are Vietnam veterans. The problem is not exclusive to L.A. Some studies have indicated that as many as third of the nation's homeless are veterans under 40.⁷

The survey by the House Select Committee on Hunger found the average age for the homeless falls in the mid-thirties; 15 to 25 percent are women; 40 to 50 percent are from minorities; and, 20 to 30 percent are families.⁸ While the Reagan Administration tries to portray the homeless as mental cases, the report points out that "recent research reveals that homelessness

is endemic among the same group for whom poverty and unemployment is also endemic."

The rise in the number of homeless families and children is a main concern. For example, in New York City, families with children comprise 76 percent of the homeless, in Philadelphia, Trenton and Yonkers the figure is 50 percent and in Boston they are two-thirds of the homeless.

A survey of 25 cities, released last month by the National Coalition for the Homeless, found that shelter workers reported an increase in the number of working homeless who did not earn enough to pay for housing. On the average, 30 percent of shelter occupants were working full or part time.⁹

With homelessness comes hunger and with hunger comes poor health and the spread of disease. The infant mortality rate at homeless shelters, even the best of them, is soaring.

Families have to wait in long lines for food stamps or welfare benefits and are routinely turned away because they lost identification papers when they were evicted or burned-out by greedy landlords.

AGAIN, BLAME THE VICTIMS

To solve the problems of the homeless and the hungry, emergency federal measures are needed. The Reagan Administration's response to the crisis has been one of neglect and denial. Attorney General Meese said not so long ago, "We've had considerable information that people go to soup kitchens because the food is free and that's easier than paying for it."

Reagan, himself, declared that people go to sleep on grates "by choice," and Secretary of State Shultz ordered the homeless who were sleeping on heat grates outside the Department of State removed forcibly until public reaction forced him to retract the directive.

Recently, the Reagan Administration protested when the United Nations made a film to commemorate 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The Reagan reasoning was that the film would "violate individual rights."

The Pentagon has constantly refused to adhere to a 1983 congressional order that required the Department of Defense to make underused or unused military facilities available to the homeless. Although \$9 million was set aside for that program, only \$2 million was spent. This from a Pentagon that wastes millions on astronomically priced toilet seats and screws bought from contractors who are cronies of Administration officials.

In June 1987, the administration opposed a plan that would allow cities to use welfare funds to build low cost housing for the homeless.

FIRST LEGISLATIVE RESPONSES

Recently Congress passed its first measure, Public Law 100-77, to deal with the homeless. Introduced by Stewart B. McKinney (R.-Conn.), it provided for \$923 million to be spent on emergency measures for the next two years. Reagan reluctantly signed the bill with knowledge that a veto would be overridden, just as he reluctantly responded to the long hunger strike by D.C. activist Mitch Snyder to provide funds for a model shelter.

The McKinney Act provides for health care and mental health services, emergency housing, renovation of some shelters, single-room occupancy dwellings (SROs) for alcohol and drug abuse treatment and various other programs. The Act has a provision which seeks to make it easier for the homeless to obtain food stamps and welfare if they do not have "proper" identification.

The McKinney Act is a start. Yet \$400 million would not even provide the funds required for housing in New York City alone. Much more is needed. Funds, in 1988, have not been allocated and many worry that in the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings cuts, conservative forces will try to eliminate most of the \$400 million the McKinney bill calls for in 1988.

By far the major of legislation dealing with the homeless introduced in the first session of the 100th Congress is H.R. 286, The Homeless Persons Survival Act of 1987. This bill, introduced by Mickey Leland (D.-TX), chairman of

the House Select Committee on Hunger and former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, has more than 60 congressional sponsors. Its companion in the Senate was introduced by Albert Gore (D.-TN). The legislation has been endorsed by over 60 national organizations of which the National Coalition for the Homeless has been the leading advocate.

H.R. 286 has three distinct parts: the first deals with emergency measures, the second, preventative provisions and the third centers on long term solutions. While H.R. 286 is an omnibus bill, sections have been introduced separately. Several have become law, most notably the McKinney Act. Some were contained in the Homeless Persons Bill of Rights of 1986.

Other measures prohibit the federal government from denying SSI, Medicaid or veteran's benefits because an applicant has no fixed address. Yet, in many cases these laws never achieve their intended effect because of Reagan's cuts in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), reductions in social security and wiping many veterans off the benefit rolls.

Legislation dealing with emergency relief for the homeless comprises the first section of the Homeless Persons Survival Act. The individual pending bills which have been introduced to flesh it out are:

- H.R. 178 provides for emergency assistance for homeless youth, ages 16-17.
- H.R. 179 prohibits public schools from denying admission to homeless youths because they do not have a permanent address in a school district.
- H.R. 180 the "National Right to Shelter Act of 1987," is a statement of principle with no dollar sums included.
- H.R. 181 provides for outreach measures to inform the homeless about their rights to receive food stamps, SSI and other benefits. This bill would also prevent the homeless from being denied benefits merely because they have no identification.
- H.R. 274 enables AFDC funds that are now spent to pay rent in "welfare hotels" to be used to create temporary shelters.

H.R. 287 allots "not more than \$50 million a year" for health care and mental services for the homeless.

H.R. 288 "establishes grants to private nonprofit institutions for the establishment or expansion of shelters for homeless parents with newborn children.

H.R. 437 provides for federal grants to build and expand shelters and emergency recovery centers.

Additionally, certain portions of the Homeless Persons Survival Act seek preventative measures to slow the increase of the homeless population. They are:

H.R. 289 changes AFDC rules that encourage the breakup of families.

H.R. 290 prevents unnecessary evictions and foreclosures, and, by preserving low-income housing, increases its supply.

The last section of the Homeless Persons Survival Act deals with longterm solutions. In its analysis of this section, the National Coalition for the Homeless sums up by saying:

The Act seeks responsible longterm solutions to homelessness by redressing what is widely recognized as its major cause: an increasing scarcity of low-income housing.

Highlights of this portion of the bill are: an

increase in public housing units; requiring local governments, which receive federal funds, to make vacant and tax-foreclosed buildings available to the homeless; encouraged development of community-based residences for the mentally-ill homeless.

The HPSA also calls for modernization of 70,000 vacant housing units each year for the next 15 years at a cost of \$150 million a year; to build or rehabilitate 50,000 public housing units each year at an annual cost of \$300 million; and, various other programs. Compared to what is presently being done, this bill, if passed, would put a dent in the problem. However, more drastic measures are needed.

RESPONSE OF THE CITIES

Some local areas have passed measures to deal with the crisis. In Washington, DC, Initiative 17, "The Right to Shelter", was passed overwhelmingly. Yet Mayor Marion Barry has continually gone to court seeking to overturn the measure. Despite 10,000 to 15,000 homeless in the nation's capital, he has said the measure is not needed and that it will be too costly. Berry, whose administration has had 14 officials indicted for misappropriating millions of dollars, says the measure will waste taxpayers' money.

	Number of Homeless	Number of Shelter Beds	Increase in Homeless 1985-1986	Number of Households on Public Housing Waiting List
BOSTON	5,000- 8,000	1,400	10%-20%	12,500
CHICAGO	12,000-25,000	2,700	—	40,000 +
LOS ANGELES	33,000-50,000	3,640	26%	27,000
NEW YORK	60,000-80,000	22,000	20%	200,000 +
PHILADELPHIA	2,500	2,500	—	10,000 +
SAN FRANCISCO	4,500- 5,500	3,321	—	11,912 +
SEATTLE	3,500- 4,000	1500-1,800	10%	1,315 +
WASHINGTON	10,000-15,000	3,291	10%	11,728 +

SOURCES: National Coalition for the Homeless, *National Shame; America's Homeless Outlook, Winter '86-'87*; U.S. Conference of Mayors, *The Growth of Hungry, Homeless and Poverty in American Cities*, June, 1986; U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, June 1986.

In Los Angeles, there is a 12-acre camp, called the "Dust Bowl Hilton" or "Soweto, USA," which "houses" 600 homeless. Those who enter are subjected to search in concentration-camp style by armed guards.

In Seattle, voters approved a \$50 million property tax levy for low-income apartments primarily to house homeless families. However, in Seattle, a new anti-homeless vagrancy measure punishes so-called aggressive begging.

In Denver, voters defeated, in June of 1987, a right-to-shelter initiative.

According to the *New York Times*,¹⁰ in several areas, repressive measures against the homeless have been attempted and, in some cases, successfully: in Santa Barbara an effort to ban sleeping in public places was dropped only after threats of a nationwide protest; in Phoenix, the largest private shelter furnishes names and social security numbers to the police for checking against criminal files; in some cities the mentally ill are bussed to other cities—a procedure known as "Greyhound therapy"; and, in Ft. Lauderdale a city councilman proposed putting poison in garbage cans to keep the homeless from foraging for food.

Although some cities and states, as well as churches, civic associations and organizations, have tried to deal with the crisis through measures such as shelters and food lines, nothing short of emergency and longterm federal intervention will solve the problem. The scope of the problem is demonstrated by the chart above which shows the situation in eight major cities.

The homeless crisis is as old as capitalism. Frederick Engels wrote 143 years ago that

. . . fifty thousand human beings get up every morning, not knowing where they are going to lay their heads at night. . . . They sleep where they find a place, in passages, arcades, in corners where the police and owners leave them undisturbed. A few individuals find their way to the refuges here and there which are managed by private charities, others sleep on benches in the park close under the windows of Queen Victoria.¹¹

Indeed, Engel's London of yesteryear is today's L.A., New York and other cities and

towns, large and small.

Instead of seeking solutions, the Reagan Administration does all in its power to exacerbate it. The Gramm-Rudman Hollings budget-cutting measure calls for eliminating \$2.6 billion from domestic programs.

According to the Center on Budgetary and Policy Priorities, only 24.4 percent of the jobless (officially understated at under eight million), receive any unemployment benefits. This means that near 75 percent, the highest rate in 30 years, lack means of support.¹² These millions, along with over 6 million partially employed and the millions cut off welfare, SSI and the veterans removed from entitlement rolls, have been set on the road to homelessness.

WHAT MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN

Without emergency measures by Congress, the situation of the homeless and hungry will worsen. Advocates of a \$22.3 billion measure expanding economic aid to localities and providing for new low-income housing construction hope that the Senate Democratic majority will reverse the 1986 rejection of similar legislation by the then Republican majority.

While the Senate has thus far done little to try to solve the problem, the situation has been more favorable in the House. The effort there has been led by Mickey Leland, Ted Weiss (D.-NY), Henry Gonzalez (D.-NY), William Lehman (D.-FL) and the entire Black Caucus. Indeed, while the House of Representatives passed a housing authorization bill by a vote of 391 to 1, in the Senate the bill was bogged down by Reagan conservatives.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Governors Association have been in the forefront in demanding federal action. A report of the National Governors' Association states that "over the grim statistics on homelessness looms the shadow of a housing crisis which well may be unexampled in this century."¹³

There have been many noble efforts to solve the homeless plight. Many individuals and organizations have fought long and hard for immediate actions to build emergency shel-

ters. Many thousands of homeless are fed by churches and charitable organizations not only on holidays but on a day-to-day basis. Barrack-like shelters and welfare hotels do allow some to get off the street, but in the words of the late rhythm and blues singer, Marvin Gaye. "this ain't living."

Victor Perlo, chair of the Economics Commission, CPUSA, estimates that:

if the share of public housing were raised to the Roosevelt era ratio of 12.5 per cent of all housing constructed annually there would be 250,000 public units a year or 1,000,000 in a four-year period.¹⁴

He goes on, however, to say that this would

...not be enough to solve the housing problem of the 24 million with housing problems . . . [That] would require 2 million public housing units a year for ten years. The material, labor and capital resources of the United States are more than ample to build 2 million housing units a year, given not only the end of Star Wars but acceptance by Washington of the Soviet proposals for total nuclear disarmament and radical conventional disarmament.

The stark and desperate facts of the homeless crisis nationally demand that Reagan call a special session of Congress to deal with it. Likewise, emergency sessions of legislatures on a state, city, town and village level are needed in the myriad of areas where the homeless plight persists or threatens.

Major elements of required action are:

- Use of eminent domain and "tax" seizures to immediately make vacant housing available to the homeless. These must include: empty city-owned apartments; those which landlords are "warehousing" for conversion to

luxury housing; premises where landlords harass tenants by denial of heat, electricity, water and other services.

- Assumption of administrative and fiscal responsibility to make habitable for the homeless (at prevailing wages) all dwellings owned by government.

- Adopt long-range programs for public housing construction to build no less than 2 million units a year for the next ten years.

The tragic plight of the homeless objectively is a workingclass crisis. It is a burden on all but the exploiting strata of society who profit from it. As a human plight, millions are moved by it and can be organized to end it. Mass action to accomplish this is a special task of Communists and all advanced political activists. Every component of the all people's front, beginning with the trade union movement, must and can be organized in the fight to end it. □

Notes

1. *Washington Post*, June 3, 1987
2. Nov. 26, 1986
3. National Association of Realtors, Washington, D.C., Sept. 26, 1987
4. Select Committee on Hunger, U.S. House of Representatives, *Hunger Among the Homeless*, March 1987
5. June 17, 1987
6. Op. cit., note 4, p. 10
7. March 10, 1987
8. Op. cite, note 4, p.7
9. *Washington Post*, December 4, 1987
10. November 29, 1987
11. "The Condition of the Working Class in England", *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 4, International Publishers, 1975, p. 336
12. *Baltimore Sun*, November 12, 1987
13. *1933-1983, Never Again*, 1987, p. 18
14. December 9, 1986

Who Profits from the Homeless' Plague

A Marxist Analysis

DOLORES DWYER

One part of society thus exacts tribute from another for the permission to inhabit the earth, as landed property in general assigns the landlord the privilege of exploiting the terrestrial body, the bowels of the earth, the air, and thereby the maintenance and development of life.

Karl Marx

On Thanksgiving morning, I began a walk to the park that skirts the Hudson River behind my apartment house. On my way, I passed a young woman dressed in dirty jeans and a jacket. She was peering into the garbage cans along the street, evidently looking for food. She headed towards the row of local stores that borders the neighborhood "triangle," a little plot of cement with benches around the edges, where other homeless people had slept during the night. At the nearby subway entrance, a man camped out under the overhang, sheltered by an arrangement of shopping cart, cardboard and blankets. As I continued toward the park, passing under the highway, I spotted a man filling some plastic containers with water from a nearby hydrant. Then he disappeared with them into the woods.

Because Thanksgiving is a holiday when we think of food and families, warmth and shelter, the misery of homelessness hits us even more sharply than on other days. But it is there on other days, and it gets worse and worse. My neighborhood is no exception from the rest of New York City where homelessness is a daily fact of life. People sleep on subway cars, in bus stations, in the parks; they huddle against the cold in alleys, corners, doorways, and in city-run shelters and welfare hotels.

The most often cited official estimate of

homelessness in New York City numbers them at 60,000. This is a gross understatement. Over the past 19 years there have been an estimated two million evictions of tenants, along with the ejection of 60,000 mental patients from state hospitals. There has also been a loss of hundreds of thousands of low-income rental apartments through arson, and abandonment as well as warehousing for and conversion to high priced co-ops and condominiums.

Homelessness is in every metropolitan area around the country, and in suburbs and rural villages. There are literally millions of people homeless in our country, not just in the streets, but doubled-up with relatives living in substandard housing. The homeless of this country exist side by side with the overcrowded, the underheated, the harassed and overcharged, rent-poor tenant—and homeowner too. The crisis of homelessness is a crisis of housing. Unless drastic measures are taken it will only get worse.

LAND AND RENT • Landlords and developers today complain that increased costs in constructing and maintaining buildings are driving up rents and forcing high prices for housing. The question one must ask is: If they can't make any money in real estate, then why do they get into it in the first place? The answer is that real estate investment can be extremely lucrative, but by trumpeting the costs of financing, materials and maintenance, they hope to divert attention from profit-making, the major element in property ownership: the cost of the land itself.

Land is a clearly limited natural resource. There is only so much of it, and no more. Under modern capitalism, land is privately owned. This was not always the case. In earlier societies which operated communally, ownership and use of the land was shared by all. That changed over the centuries as societies developed econ-

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omies based on commodity exchange, exploitation, slavery and war. Territory and land began to acquire a value of their own.

The term "landlord" is a holdover from feudalism, the economic system that existed immediately before capitalism. That economy was primarily agricultural; a landlord then really was the lord of the land. By virtue of nothing else except his title to a large tract of land, the lord would permit tenants (serfs) to live within the boundaries of his estate, to work the land, and to hand over the major portion of the product of their labor in rent.

As capitalism began to replace feudalism, a manufacturing economy replaced the agricultural economy. Cities arose; use of the land changed from strictly agricultural to a mix of agricultural, residential and commercial.

Rent became payment in money (or other forms) for occupancy and use of the land by capitalist farmers who would hire workers to raise crops for sale at the market, and by industrial capitalists who needed locations to build their factories. But not all rents were the same.

The rent we are most familiar with is "house rent"—payment for use of a house or an apartment over a period of time. In one respect, this is a simple commodity exchange, just as when the worker buys food at the store. The house is a commodity built of raw material by the labor of wage earners from whom the owner has extracted surplus value. Like other commodities, the building has a value derived from the "average socially necessary labor time" required for its production.

But unlike other commodities, the building

sits on a tract of land, which has a price of its own that does not come from labor. A considerable part of "house rent" paid by a tenant goes into paying for "ground rent"—the price of the land on which the house sits.

Karl Marx defined ground rent as "that form in which property in land is realized economically; that is, produces value." [*Capital*, Volume III, New York, 1967, p. 618]

Under the general category of ground rent, Marx distinguished between "absolute rent," the price based on the fact that there is a fixed amount of land in existence, enabling whoever owns it to exact a price for its use regardless of its quality; and "differential rent"—an additional price for use of the land—a price which can be gotten because of its location, or the natural resources contained in it, or any other feature which would benefit someone wishing to use it. Fertile land can bring a higher price than infertile land. A barren tract between cities can

be worth very little until a railroad is planned to be built on it. That land then rises in price. Land situated near an industrial center will have a high differential rent.

The profit gained from the payment of ground rent is different from surplus value, which is the essence of capitalist exploitation. The origin and character of surplus value is illustrated in the following brief example:

A wage earner works eight hours a day for the owner of the factory, say, and in one day assembles ten computer keyboards. This worker earns \$5 an

hour; and for one day earns a gross amount of \$40. But, when the factory owner sells the keyboards to a distributor, he gets \$80 for ten of them—the equivalent of two days' pay for the



worker. He has paid the wage earner for only one day. The rest, which Marx termed surplus value, stays with the factory owner, because he holds title to the factory, the machines, and the materials used (the "means of production").

However, the factory owner can not keep all the surplus value. He has other expenses. He has to pay for financing the purchase of the means of production; he has to pay rent to the landowner for use of the land. What is left over is his profit; and his rate of profit has to do with the relationship between the amount of surplus value he can extract and the expense of his machinery and materials.

Under capitalism there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall over time. This happens as machinery and technology become more important to the production process, increasing the fixed expenses of the capitalist in relation to the number of workers or the hours they work. Even when the total amount of profit rises, the tendency for the rate of profit to fall continues.

In land ownership, in itself produces nothing new and extracts no surplus value. In this sense, the real estate industry is parasitic. It does not produce anything, but it does consume the product—rent—of others' labor.

This payment of rent to the landowner is not necessary for capitalism to exist. It would be technically possible for capitalism to remain as an economic system if the government owned the land, for instance, and permitted capitalists to erect factories on it free of charge, or workers to build their own houses on it. At one time, some economists have argued for such a system as a way to cut the price of food.

For any given capitalist enterprise, not having to pay rent would improve profits, because it would have to pay less out of the surplus value that has been extracted. But despite this, the capitalists have never been eager to advance the idea of public ownership of property. Things could go too far, and they themselves could be required to hand over their private property—their factories, mines, etc.

There is no conflict in a class sense between landowning and other forms of exploitation. The economic forces that rule our economy today consist of a complex amalgam of moneyed

interests, with the wealth produced by the workers flowing among them in a vast network of financing, manufacturing, interest, investment, and speculation, always seeking the highest return on the dollar regardless of what benefits the city and the people who live in it.

WHAT BOOSTS GROUND RENT • Ground rent is increased through capital improvements on the land. This makes sense: the land is not worth much if there is nothing on it that can be used. Once it is developed, its worth increases.

The potential to make a high profit through building is limited, said Marx, because the time period required for the work is long, and the cost of the materials and labor is relatively high. Therefore, said Marx, "(the landowner's) main profit comes from raising the ground rent, from careful selection and skilled utilization of the building terrain." [*Capital*, Vol. II, op. cit., p.234]. Marx refers to a builder who has leased a plot of ground for 300 (British) pounds a year. The builder himself says that by

. . . putting certain descriptions of buildings upon it, he may succeed in making 400 or 450 pounds a year out of it, and his profit would be the increased ground-rent of 100 or 150 pounds a year, rather than the profit of the buildings which . . . in many instances, he scarcely looks at it at all. [*Ibid.*, p. 774]

In other words, the property owner derives profit by receiving a price for the land, not by extracting surplus value from the labor of a wage earner. But the actual rent itself, when paid by the industrial capitalist for the factory site, comes out of the surplus value extracted from the worker; when paid by the worker comes out of his or her earned wage. Either way, it is the worker who ultimately pays for use of the land which someone else owns.

(In today's real estate industry, the landowner and the builder are rarely the same person or corporate entity. Developers usually hire private contractors to build offices, housing, or multi-use complexes on urban land. After the land is developed, the owner may keep it and collect rent. Or the property may be sold to a new owner who will pay a higher price based on the higher ground rent.)

This analysis of ground rent can be applied to the allocation of costs in running an apartment building in New York City. One useful measure is the table of components used to calculate allowable increases under the city's rent control laws. According to the table, out of the collected rents an average of 39 per cent goes to operations and maintenance (repairs, management, heat, etc.) about 18 percent to taxes, water and sewer charges; and about 43 percent to what is called "return on capital value." This third category might roughly be considered to be equivalent to the ground rent. It includes interest, amortization of the mortgage and profit.

(Interest payment is not part of ground rent, so when estimating ground rent equivalents, the prevailing interest rate should be subtracted from the percentage in this category. But, it is significant to note that while tenant's rent covers the landlord's interest costs, the property owner is allowed to write it off as a business expense.)

Values will vary from building to building, depending on the purchase price, interest rate, and many other factors but it is important to understand how huge a chunk of rent payment goes into the cost of the land. It is also shocking to think that every time the rent goes up, the worth of the land rises, so that tenants actually contribute (against their will) to the cause of the next rent increase.

(The percentages provided in this table also assume that the landlord is making all necessary repairs and providing proper maintenance, as well as conscientiously paying real estate taxes. As tenants well know, most of the time this does not happen—which increases the profit to the landlord. However, this is not profit gained from ground rent, but rather by robbery.)

SPECULATION • Another common method of profiting from the price of land is to buy it for a low price, based on its present relative lack of value, and later to sell it at a higher price without developing it, but only based on its future desirability. This is called speculation. Throughout the history of capitalism, developments of new industrial sites, for instance, have resulted in a rise in land prices, determined by the po-

tential rent-enhancing development that is likely to occur on it. This rise in property values usually has a ripple effect; as the cost of one piece of land goes up, the tract next to it will also tend to rise in price.

This ripple phenomenon can even be manipulated, and often is. One example is when banks "redline" certain areas for a time. In most cases, this takes the form of bankers refusing to lend mortgage money in neighborhoods where Black and other nationally oppressed people live, so that development can not take place. As a result, buildings deteriorate, and land prices go down. Then developers, with the banks' blessing, can come in at a later date, buy up the land at depressed prices, and erect luxury residential or high priced commercial buildings.

In recent years, successful speculation in land has been hampered by the presence of tenants living in low income housing or single-room-occupancy hotels. Investors can not physically develop land that has people living on it. We have witnessed the cruel spectacle, therefore, of poor and often elderly people being evicted or harassed out their dwellings to make room for speculators. The evicted tenants often swell the ranks of the homeless.

Governments controlled by real estate interests are also part of this process by: offering financial incentives, zoning allowances and tax breaks for developers to "improve" certain areas; speeding the deterioration of a neighborhood by putting a highway through it or withdrawing services from it; and failing to enact or enforce anti-discriminatory laws and anti-eviction and anti-harassment statutes.

FINANCING AND LEVERAGE • Buying land and developing it requires a lot of money. Behind the army of land purchasers and developers stands an armada of finance capitalists—banks and insurance companies—ready to put up the sums needed. Because finance capitalists have the power to lend money or not lend money, they are really the decision-makers who shape most urban and suburban developments today. Arrangements are often complex, involving different kinds of mortgages and loans for purchase of the land, the actual building, and other

costs to the developer.

But the most common method of investment financing brings extremely high returns for the developer, along with little risk and plenty of interests payments to the banks.

That method is called "leveraging." In leveraging, the developer provides very little of the actual financing needed for a project. In many cases, he puts up only 5 percent or 10 percent of his own money, and borrows the rest, using the property as collateral. When he reaps his return, he earns a good percentage of the entire cost, for which he advanced very little front-money. The financiers, who have advanced up to 90 per cent of the capital, also profit because they are paid interest on all of that. They don't mind if the cost is high. The higher the cost, the more interest they receive. The cost of interest gets passed along to the tenant, who pays for it in his rent bill.

CURRENT CONDITIONS • All the above elements go into making real estate investment highly profitable under any conditions. Today a number of elements have converged to make it even more so.

One of them is the above-mentioned tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The amount of profit continues to increase, as yearly corporate reports glowingly testify. But for every dollar invested in industrial ventures, the return tends to be reduced. In the meantime, accumulated capital, seeking investment somewhere, will look for the highest return on the dollar. Real estate is one of those areas.

We have seen this happen in the U.S. steel industry, where manufacturers failed to invest in new steelmaking equipment. That earned them a higher rate of profit in the short term. But it resulted ultimately in an inability to compete with steel produced in other countries where the equipment is up to date. The investment dollar, therefore, fails to go into steel, steel plants are closed, and the steel corporations themselves "diversify" by taking the surplus value that they originally expropriated in the making of steel and they invest elsewhere where the rate of profit is highest. Giant steel monopolies have increasingly invested in oil,

for instance; and oil corporations are one of the major investors in real estate.

The heightened reliance on real estate for high return on the investment dollar has led to increased monopolization of financing and development by the same corporations that are seeking to invest their dollars in it. Developers are more and more often financed by, or actually are, subsidiaries of major corporate conglomerates. Insurance, aerospace, oil, steel, utility, and other companies use real estate investment as a hedge against inflation, and as a tax haven. In the early 1980s insurance and other financial institutions were buying up the bulk of commercial real estate properties.

In addition, banks and large corporations stimulate the demand for new commercial enterprises in times of expansion. With their power to grant or withhold loans, finance capitalists and large scale corporate developers can manipulate the pace of development and the value of properties in any city. Thus, they can control the rise and fall of prices for land, setting the stage for speculation through their ability to buy land at reduced cost, develop it, and sell it at enhanced cost or collect high rents on it.

In times of recession, they have the resources to take advantage of depressed real estate prices and extend their monopoly, thereby setting the stage for increased profits during boom times. The more land they control, the more they can even hold onto or dispose of as they may choose.

On top of that, real estate development is more and more aided by city, state and federal governments, which offer tax abatements, low-interest loans, subsidized power rates, highway or transportation improvements, and other amenities at taxpayer expense.

CONCLUSIONS AND SOLUTIONS • What exists in most U.S. cities today, is the equivalent of a supermonopoly controlling "ground rent" for all the land on which people live. In residential housing in New York City, for example, the vacancy rate for low and moderate income rental housing is virtually at zero. There is absolutely nowhere to move to for anyone who is evicted.

Homelessness is very much a result of the

monopoly ownership of private property. The processes described above are made all the more severe because they are deliberately manipulated in a zipped-tight market, with prices driven artificially and relentlessly up. Rent increases, conversion of rentals to co-ops, phony rehabilitations, and many other legal and illegal methods are used daily to force up costs, and force out those who can not pay.

The real estate industry makes no profit from people who don't pay rent. They make it from those who *do* pay rent—employed workers, middle strata professionals and small capitalists. By maintaining a certain level of homelessness, property owners extract the most they can from rent-payers.

Also hurt by the relentless rise of real estate profits are homeowners, who likewise are hit by higher land costs. The escalation of land values has meant increased tax assessments for many single-family homeowners; for others, it has put the ability to buy a home far out of reach and added many to the rolls of renters, paying more and more money for less and less quality housing and putting a further squeeze on the already tight rental market.

Homelessness is to housing as unemployment is to wage exploitation. That is: even though the capitalist extracts no surplus value directly from the jobless worker, the presence of the unemployed serves as a damper on wages in general and a brake on the ability of workers to organize for better wages.

In general, landlords make no direct profit from the homeless, but the existence of homelessness forces tenants to pay more in rents for less and less quality housing. Those landlords who are paid exorbitant rentals by cities to house the homeless in abominable condition do reap outsize profits and contribute to forcing up rental rates.

Homelessness is also a crisis of unemployment. The suffering of people made homeless through loss of jobs is as horrible as that of those who have been pushed out by land speculation. Often, it is a combination of both that results in eviction.

What is needed is an anti-monopoly program for housing. Homelessness and the housing crisis will not end until government becomes the major provider of housing. An immediate program to build and rehabilitate housing for low income tenants must be initiated, especially with federal money taken from the military budget and higher taxes on large corporations and wealthy individuals. Such a program, not insignificantly, also would create jobs. It must be implemented with affirmative action and job training programs for those who are hardest hit by unemployment, just as the first priority for housing should be for those who are homeless or live in the worst housing.

In addition, rational planning must begin in cities, suburbs and rural areas, to halt the anarchistic rampage of current real estate speculation. Emergency measures must be enacted, like stringent rent controls and rent freezes and a ban on evictions, apartment warehousing and luxury conversion.

Such measures can ease the crisis that exists in housing. But as one can see from the principles behind real estate investment, this problem will always exist as long as individuals are permitted to exploit other people and the earth for their private profit. Communists seek a more radical solution, one that will only be achieved with the nationalization of land ownership and of a socialist system.

In his essays on *The Housing Question*, Frederick Engels put it thus:

But one thing is certain: there are already in existence sufficient buildings for dwellings in the big towns to remedy immediately any real "housing shortage," [italics in original] given rational utilization of them. This can naturally only take place by the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses the homeless or those workers excessively overcrowded in their former houses. Immediately after the proletariat has conquered political power such a measure dictated in the public interests will be just as easy to carry out as other expropriations and billings are by the existing state. [International Publishers, New York, 1933, p. 36] □

Confronting the nation's crisis in education

NATIONAL TEACHERS COMMISSION, CPUSA

The following article is based on a recent discussion of the National Teachers Commission of the CPUSA. It is offered to the readers of P.A. in the hope that it will encourage a wide ranging discussion of teachers, parents and other readers.

For most people the first days of a new career are filled with excitement and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, for many new teachers it is a period of shock, and for some, demoralization.

Despite a sense of idealism and dedication that many of these new teachers bring with them, the appalling conditions of the school system are often too overwhelming. The result is a drop-out rate for first-year teachers that is staggering.

In most cases classes are too large for effective teaching. A complicated tracking system combined with an all out attack on bilingual education dooms a large percentage of the students to inferior education—and with it the hopes of enthusiastic teachers who want to help students to advance and learn. Staff salaries, while rising, do not in any way measure the value of a teacher's work. And, students and teachers alike are often treated in a callous and dehumanized way that sends one message loud and clear—leave!

With such a reality facing them each and every day, it doesn't take long for the teachers who do survive to learn and appreciate that they are in the true sense of the word, workers, whose future well-being is linked to collective action, and not individual arrangements with top administrators. As a result, teachers in almost every major city are active trade unionists. As such, they face the problems of most workers and unionists.

They have to struggle to bring home enough salary to enable their families to live decently. To mention a few of their pressing problems: they have to struggle against difficult working conditions, speed-up, union busting and management demands for givebacks.

But teachers, by the very nature of their work, also face a particular set of problems. Unlike most workers, the "product" of a teacher's labor is not an inanimate article but an educated human being, in most cases, the child of other workers. As a result, teachers have a special responsibility to do their work well. Our relationships to our students, their parents, and to the community in which we teach is especially vital. So too, is the struggle for decent working conditions, which affects not only teachers, but the well-being of the students.

Teachers must also deal with the special effects created by the fact that working of the school system is interwoven with the overall policies of government, nationally and locally. The outlook for future employment, the shift in industry to high-tech computer technology, government budgetary policies, racial and even foreign policies deeply affect the atmosphere and conditions in our schools.

This relationship also arises from the fact that the ruling class has always used the educational institutions of our country to mold students according to their own ideas, practices and policies.

For teachers, therefore, there is a special need to connect the overall governmental corporate policies to the struggle for better schools. For Communist teachers this creates a special responsibility.

In his report to the 24th National Convention of the CPUSA, Gus Hall, general secretary,

focused on the difference between what he called, "good trade union work" and "Communist trade union work." He made the point that Communists must make the connection between the immediate issues and the main questions of the day. The report stressed that in any struggle Communists must ask themselves, "How do we develop class consciousness among those with whom we work?" In the case of teachers this question is especially important, and it applies not only to our approach to fellow workers, but to the children whom we teach.

Especially because the conditions of teachers and students are so tied to the overall policies and outlook of government and industry, reforms in education must necessarily confront a wide array of issues. To win clarity on any one issue of educational reform, there is a need to go beyond it and to examine and discuss broader issues of the day. In other words, for students and teachers today, effective trade unionism requires more class consciousness. And contributing to this class outlook is the special job of Communist teachers.

During the Reagan Administration, the push by the ruling class to tie public education more firmly to the corporate structure and particularly to the military-industrial complex has gained some success.

As the scientific-technological revolution creates automation on a larger and larger scale, the means of eliminating masses of workers from the productive life of the nation has rapidly increased.

In the drive for greater profits many cor-

porations, and the politicians that serve them, doom masses of potential workers to permanent unemployment, homelessness, poverty and illiteracy. And too, they have abandoned the children of this population. This abandonment is having a profound impact on the educational system.

Education should mean preparing children and youth to live meaningful lives with useful jobs. Socialism guarantees this. But capitalism is only interested in training those sectors of the population that it needs for making greater profits.

The chips-and-robot revolution increases the need for workers in the skilled and semi-skilled levels of production. It also increases the number of youth bound for permanent unemployment. Today's schools are preparing youth for both futures.

Capitalism needs workers who are highly trained and skilled, workers with more flexible, inventive, problem-solving skills—but only a few of them. For the rest of the young generation, preparation for the future means preparing to "adjust" to

lower expectations. A school system that produces millions of college graduates, only to face unemployment, is a school system that, in the view of big business, produces only restlessness and rebellion. A school system that spends millions of dollars on educating youth who are unprofitable to big business, is in their view, a waste of money. Much better to use this money for speculation, or investment abroad, than to educate the entire young generation. Thus the contradiction, as our nation moves into the high-tech era, our schools are deteriorating, and



illiteracy is growing.

The society we seek—socialism—necessitates that all of its citizens are equipped to utilize creative thinking and problem-solving skills, since high-tech under socialism does not produce unemployment. It is only natural, therefore, that those who believe in peace, socialism, full employment, also believe in school curriculums that equip all our students for a meaningful life. Fighting to implement a curriculum that equips all students for today's and tomorrow's world is in our immediate self-interest.

The so-called Educational Reform Movement that has grown up in recent years is the opposite. It is in many ways the creation of monopoly capital. It is an attempt to remake the educational system to meet the needs of monopoly. As teachers, parents and Communists, we must fight to change this direction.

The new challenge affecting the class struggle in public education is to make education serve the interests of the whole multi-racial, multi-national, multi-lingual working class. Teachers, as the 24th convention urged, can not afford to limit their trade union fight solely to narrow, economic interests. We can not isolate the fight for economic demands from the fight for a democratic education for all, with all its implications. To narrow the struggle in education is to fight a losing battle.

TWO TRENDS BUT ONE POLICY

In education, what has been singled out as the "Crisis in Public Education" is in reality a crisis for monopoly. It is the crisis of current and future job eradication which is producing thousands of unemployed at one time and creating what even monopoly describes as "explosive conditions." Consequently, corporate monopoly has introduced its version of "educational reform." The aim of this "reform" is not to basically change the situation, but to fine-tune it, and to appease the growing dissatisfaction with the present trends in education.

In the schools, this crisis of education expresses itself in the form of who is to be taught

and what is to be taught. On this issue a sharp struggle is unfolding.

On the surface there appear to be two trends of thinking. One trend stresses creative thinking in technical problem solving, analysis, and other higher level skills. This trend stresses a child's ability to think critically and independently, within ruling class ideological boundaries.

The second trend is commonly labeled "back to basics" emphasizing the three "Rs"—reading, writing and arithmetic, but the underlying teaching methods are based on "rote, repetition and regurgitation." Classroom environments are rigidly structured allowing for little creativity or imagination. The main diet of the classroom consists of workbooks, repro sheets and textbook learning, with emphasis on passing standardized reading tests. In great part the concept is based on "custodial" care for children, not preparing children to cope with the new challenges facing them.

In reality, these two conflicting trends are really two sides of the same concept.

One concept stresses educating a select few or "elite." The other crosses off the mass of youth, preparing them for repetitive low skilled work or unemployment. Both are based on the perspectives of monopoly in the high-tech era.

The first trend in education is intended for the select few, labeled, "gifted and talented" or "those children who are motivated to learn." It is aimed at the children in the top tracks—primarily those who are white, upper and middle-class with some crumbs spilling over to the oppressed minority and white workingclass children. The other trend is intended for those whose skills are to be lowered by the new technology, or to be replaced all together.

Teachers by this standard are measured, not by how they do at instilling social values through democratic methods and multi-cultural content, but by whether they can "control the class" and keep the students quiet. With this thinking, teaching methods that are effective and show results are not important.

Inherent in this division of teaching methods is a sharpening of racism. In most cases

Afro-American and other oppressed nationalities are consigned in disproportionate numbers to schools stressing "rote" or "custodial" methods.

This divides the students and parents along racial lines. While schools have become more segregated generally, there also exists today a new form of segregation—segregated programs within those schools that are still somewhat integrated.

For white students this division fosters racism, teaching "by example," that nationally oppressed children are inferior, since they are less frequently accepted into the so-called "gifted" programs.

For the bulk of Black and other nationally oppressed children, the separation means an even wider crisis in the making. Thus, a huge percent of an entire generation of youth is being excluded from the labor market of the 21st century—and this exclusion begins in the early grades of school. Such an occurrence can not but have the most serious consequences for the nation as a whole. For the labor movement, the gains in building integrated unions and workplaces, won through hard struggle in the 1940s-1970s may well be reversed. For the school system itself, this policy has its most disastrous effects in the general attack on public education.

In cities throughout the country, there is a sharp attack on funding for education. Along side of this, a declining proportion of those who can afford private education, attend public schools. For those who do attend, fewer and fewer are being provided real educations. This undercutting of the public school system is most clearly presented in proposals by the Reaganites over the past seven years to introduce a voucher system into education, allowing some parents to redirect tax funds for education to private schools—thus leaving public schools for those who can not afford the so-called alternative.

In the "creative trend," while limited by the class outlook of its organizers, there are some aspects, that, if applied to all children, would advance the school system.

It is no accident that the more progressive minded teachers, including Communist teach-

ers are gravitating toward the latter approach seeking to apply it to studies with all their students. They correctly believe that all children can learn to think critically and analytically. For the so-called creative trend to be truly creative and democratic, however, it must be strengthened and directed toward all children, not just the top tracked classes. Equally important, it must prepare children to cope with problem solving in political and social areas of study as well. It should be democratic in its content as well as its form. It must, then, educate against racism and war, and stress the democratic traditions of the country and the working class.

Likewise, a truly democratic educational curriculum need not and should not pose learning "concepts" against learning "utilitarian skills." Both the mechanic and mathematician need, in today's world, to approach their work creatively and critically. And both must learn to sort out and solve problems, whether it be in their fields of work or in social and political life.

CHANGES IN THE TEACHERS' TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

In the struggle to improve the educational system of the country, unions play a crucial role. By fighting for higher pay and better working conditions, the teachers' unions are fighting for the improvement of the educational system as a whole. They are fighting for the kind of pay scales that attract the finest potential educators to one of the most important professions in our nation. By fighting for better working conditions, they are fighting for the best possible conditions for educating the students of our country. And by defending teachers' and students' democratic rights, they are fighting for the right of teachers to work for better schools without harassment by administrators and hostile political officials.

As a result of what the 24th Convention of the CPUSA described as "fresh winds" in the ranks of the organized trade union movement, as well as a new level of unity between labor and the Afro-American community, there is now a more favorable political climate and framework within which to work.

The new political framework shaping the labor movement has created a climate of change in the teachers' union movement. It has produced major shifts in the relationship of forces within the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Pressures from the rank and file have resulted in changes in both program and leadership.

Over the past several years, developments within the NEA (the largest organized union of teachers nationally) have led to the union adopting a number of more advanced positions on school curriculum, the struggle against racism, male supremacy and other stereotypical forms of thinking, peace, affirmative action, against South African apartheid, and other important national and international issues. The NEA has elected the first Black woman president in the labor movement. It has also developed a system to assure continuation of minority leadership and participation on the various levels of the union.

Thus the union's development is proof of the close tie between the struggle for a democratic curriculum and unity of the teachers union movement itself. In both cases the advances grow from a deepened class understanding which has spilled from the classroom into the union hall and visa versa.

Developments within NEA have also been a positive factor in helping to stimulate the progressive trend within the AFT. Thus a movement in the AFT, stimulated by the AFT Black Caucus and the United Action Caucus (a progressive caucus within the union) helped win victories at the 1986 union convention against South African apartheid and for affirmative action in the U.S.

These changes have helped push the union in a better direction on other fronts as well.

However, on many issues the counter trend remains, especially in Albert Shanker's version of "educational reform," a position compatible to the proposals of corporate monopoly. The pressures from the rank and file, however, are pushing the AFT leadership to back away

from the Shanker positions. Consequently, possibilities for progressive change are emerging in the union.

MASS ISSUES IN A UNION FRAMEWORK

Deepening the class consciousness of teachers leads to strengthening teacher participation in the mass social movements. It also strengthens union militance and unity. One contributes to the other, leading to increased cooperation, teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, teacher to student, and in these times, possibly, even teacher to administration on the local level. It helps to build broader support for progressive stands within the union and in support of progressive stands taken by other unions. It also helps to build support for the union within the schools and consequently leads to both the improvement of education and working conditions of teachers.

Closely connected to the struggle to raise the level of class consciousness and militancy among teachers is the fight to strengthen democratic representation in the union. This includes broad membership participation, discussion and input on all levels of the union citywide and as part of national discussions. Related to widening democracy in the union is the fight for democratic representation of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian, and Caribbean teachers in the union leadership and decision making.

Key to defeating Shankerism is unity of the Left forces within the NEA and the AFT. In this regard we Communists must take a hard look at our policies and methods of helping to build rank and file movements among teachers. Building such movements is an around-the-year job, not just at convention time. Activity only at conventions makes Left forces appear to be merely a counter-leadership force within the union, rather than a movement seeking to unite and advance the union as a whole. Communists who work to build the rank and file movements must be seen, first of all, as a pro-union, pro-teacher, pro-Left force. We must be action-oriented and a unifying force, strengthening the whole union while working to expand Left in-

ted leadership.

Communists, like other teachers, are trade unionists because we recognize trade union organization as essential to the working class' ability to win its needs and demands. As Communists, and trade unionists we fight to unify the teachers' unions—both the NEA and the AFT—around progressive actions and demands that will guarantee quality, integrated education. Only with this perspective can teachers' interests and teachers' conditions be served. Our self-interest is the self-interest of the workers' children we teach. Our self-interest is in linking issues of higher wages, better working conditions and better learning conditions with the struggles for peace and democracy in the country as a whole.'

Unity means the unity of Black , white, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, Asian and Chicano teachers within our schools and within society as a whole. Only through such unity can teachers build the alliances that advance the conditions in the schools and the conditions in society as a whole that benefit the labor movement.

To build this unity Communist teachers need to enhance the public face of the Party, and increase our independent role. While the newly structured National Teachers' Commission of the CPUSA is just beginning its work, it is already clear that great possibilities for new advances exist in this area of struggle.

At the present moment there are two strategic goals toward which Communist teachers must aim. Our first is to place public education and educational institutions on a democratic, non-racist basis that guarantees equal education for all.

We recognize that public education must prepare all students, regardless of class, race and or sex, to function fully in today's world, equipped to pursue useful jobs and rewarding lives. To do so, the educational system from day-care through the university, must be wrested from being a service system to the ruling class, to become a service to the interests and needs of the vast majority—in the first place, the working class.

Second, we recognize the crucial role of tea-

chers and their trade unions, the AFT and the NEA in helping to strengthen the Left and progressive trends in the U.S. labor movement.

Our role is to assist the struggle against the Albert Shanker-Lane Kirkland policies of class collaboration on all levels—in contract negotiations, on national and international policies, in the electoral arena etc.

To achieve these goals, we must work for the broadest movement possible. This means building unity within the trade union movement and unity between the community movements and labor.

Whether teachers or parents those of us on the Left must look for issues that serve as bridges to unite teachers, school workers and parents into one common movement.

Among such bridges are the issues of curriculum, educational reform, the make up of school boards and the content of school budgets.

We must learn to link the fight for a curriculum that prepares our students for the future with the fight to build the broadest rank and file forms and coalitions. We need to discuss the content and teaching methods we want to master and encourage.

We must make "elite" approaches aimed at training only the so-called "gifted and talented" the property of all students.

Communist teachers accept the challenge of the 24th Convention of the CPUSA to build the Party and to be activists with a "plus"—activists who add that special Communist contribution to the class struggle.

Our aim is to create school systems in which new teachers will not be shocked or overwhelmed, and will not leave. Instead they will be inspired and motivated because they will find dedicated school staffs, well paid and well equipped to answer the challenges of this new era in history. And they will find children learning in an environment that fosters equality and pride in their accomplishments.

Communist teachers believe that such schools systems are possible and we are convinced that together with the labor and progressive movement we can achieve them. □

Labor's Shift to the Left

Reviewing Events of the Past Year

GEORGE MEYERS

The 24th Convention of the Communist Party USA, held in Chicago in August adopted a comprehensive report delivered by General Secretary, Gus Hall, entitled *Unity: the Only Way*. Filled with a sense of optimism and confidence in the future, the report projected the concept of an all-peoples's unity against Reaganism, the ultra-Right and the giant transnational corporations.

It analyzed today's trends and developments in the trade union movement and concluded that, while an important section of top leadership in the labor movement is influenced by Right-wing concepts, developments have significantly narrowed down their influence. The main trend in the labor movement, it concluded, remains the leftward shift.

... a growing section of top and especially the middle layer of leadership is moving in a progressive direction in both domestic and foreign affairs.

Because of changing thought patterns, the membership—and the workingclass grassroots in general—increasingly responds to tactics of class struggle, class unity and class political independence.

A series of events both before and after the 24th Convention give proof to the soundness of these conclusions.

For labor, 1987 was a year of rousing struggle and advance. The April 25th March and Rally for Peace and Justice in Central America and Southern Africa, was a case in point. Over twenty top level trade unionists were joined by prominent religious leaders in calling for this important protest. Together they led unions representing over half the entire membership of the AFL-CIO. Thus, labor accounted for over half the 150,000 plus marchers in Washington, and another approximately 70,000 in San Francisco. Participation was not limited to

members of the sponsoring unions. Important contingents from the Steelworkers, Teamsters, Building Trades and other unions whose officers had refrained from sponsoring the march and rally helped swell labor's ranks in the action. Despite the fact that the Kirkland leadership (Lane Kirkland, President of the AFL-CIO) and the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department (IAD) tried their best to sabotage this action, this massive out-pouring placed organized labor in the front ranks of the fighters for peace.

JOBS WITH JUSTICE CAMPAIGN • Two months later, on June 23rd, the same union leaders who initiated April 25th, launched a campaign for "Jobs with Justice." This time they were joined by the Steelworkers, Paperworkers and United Mine Workers. This movement is being coordinated by the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department.

Trade Unionists who initiated the Jobs with Justice campaign describe it as a mobilization at the grassroots around a program of jobs for all, both union members and the unorganized; the right to a decent paying job; the right of workers to organize into unions of their own choice without interference from the corporations.

Like the movement around "April 25th," Jobs with Justice is a coalition of religious, civil rights, women's organizations, consumer and community groups under the leadership of the trade unions.

The Jobs with Justice campaign was launched with a mass rally in Miami, Fla., where the Machinists, Communications Workers and Transport Workers have been involved in sharp conflicts with the employers. More than 12,000 militant, enthusiastic workers jammed the meeting, where they heard militant speeches from trade union leaders and rank and

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filers as well as from a leader of the National Organization of Women and the Reverend Joseph Lowery, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Council.

Since then, a number of rallies have been held in areas where workers are fighting the corporations: Sioux Falls, S.D. in support of meat packers on strike against Morrell; Jay, Me., where paperworkers are engaged in a long and bitter struggle with the International Paper Company; Sante Fe, N.M., where the issue was the right of public workers to organize; Hartford, Conn., in support of the two-year long strike of UAW's Copold workers. Rallies have also been held in such cities as Nashville and Des Moines. A Jobs with Justice rally is being organized in Buffalo, N.Y.

The enthusiastic response of the rank and file to these rallies shows that the Jobs with Justice campaign is an idea whose time has come.

Jobs with Justice pledge cards are being distributed to the members of all unions. Signers pledge themselves to participate in at least five actions in the next year—strike support, grassroots organizing drives, the fight for job security and against plant closings, mass demonstrations and all forms of political activity. This makes possible the compilation of lists of rank and file activists ready to participate in trade union struggles and in the 1988 presidential and congressional elections.

The 24th Convention report updated the Party's view of trade union developments, last examined in the Draft Trade Union Program published in early October, 1985. Noting that in two years the "fresh winds," a term used in the program to describe the radicalization process in the labor movement, had grown stronger and steadier, the convention report declared:

Thought patterns have shifted to where most of the issues that united the Left forces can be raised within locals, within central and state labor bodies. The united Left forces should now think in terms of moving the whole trade union movement. In fact, the whole trade union grassroots can be mobilized in the struggle against the Right-wing.

ASSEMBLIES FOR JOBS • The National Assembly to Stop Plant Closings and Fight for Jobs, which took place in Detroit October 17-18 gave evidence of the correctness of this analysis. This assembly was initiated by a number of local and district union leaders representing a cross section of the labor movement. These leaders shared a deep concern in the continuing problems of plant closings and long term high unemployment. Some represented workers whose plants had already closed or faced imminent shutdown.

The call to the assembly struck a responsive cord. In a short period, over 100 local unions and local district leaders gave their endorsement. Over 350 delegates from across the country participated in the two day meeting. Represented were 26 international unions, and 15 unemployed, community and retiree organizations. The Black, white and Hispanic delegates, male and female, had the common characteristic that they were activists in their unions and communities.

The assembly was organized with the objective of elevating the struggle against plant closings to a new level. In two days of intensive give-and-take from the platform, the floor, and in four panels, important progress was made in reaching this objective.

Actively participating throughout the assembly were middle level leaders from such unions as Auto, Steel, Machinists, Teamsters and Food and Commercial Workers. Proceedings began with a warm welcome from officers of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW Local 33) who hosted the assembly. An official welcome from the mayor and city council of Detroit was presented by the Rev. John Peoples, a council member and trade unionist, who stayed to participate in the proceedings.

Lewie Anderson, Food and Commercial Workers' vice president in charge of packing-house gave a keynote speech which set a tone of enthusiasm, confidence and militancy that permeated the entire proceedings.

Tom Turner, president of the Detroit Metro AFL-CIO Council presented an in-depth analysis of problems facing workers in the U.S. Par-

ticipants responded with a standing ovation. Detroit City Council Member Erma Henderson spoke about the problems of plant closings, high unemployment and their drastic impact on the city.

A wide discussion and an exchange of ideas took place on the floor of the assembly and in four lively panels. The discussion and conclusions showed unanimity on a number of concepts that only a short time ago were considered to the Left of most of the participants. For example, one resolution adopted unanimously (as were all resolutions) called for "nationalization of industries as an alternative to moving plants overseas and exporting of jobs." In the same vein, another declared that "if private industry doesn't want to operate plants, public ownership should be considered as an alternative." A resolution calling for a federal health care system presented by a group of retired trade unionists from Ohio received the same positive response. In calling for an expanded program to develop trade with other countries, the assembly urged "particular attention to modifying the Jackson-Vanik restrictions on trade with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."

A strong sense of unity was a mark of the assembly. Every call for unions to resolve differences and work more closely together was welcomed. A resolution condemning attempts by the Reagan Administration to place the Teamsters Union in receivership was greeted with an ovation. This sense of unity extended to workers abroad. A number of speakers talked of the need to unite with workers abroad. Others spoke of the need to unite with workers in the newly developing countries who are also victims of the U.S. transnational corporations. The assembly urged greater cooperation between the AFL-CIO and all other international labor organizations, regardless of political orientation. The apartheid government of South Africa was especially condemned.

The assembly paid special attention to the need to unite political action with the economic struggle. Perry Johnson, director of UAW Region 1, called for federal legislation to outlaw the export of capital, declaring that the problem

of plant closings can't be solved at the bargaining table alone. At the time of the assembly, the UAW had just concluded negotiations with General Motors. The UAW had made job security a major demand. Yet G.M. arrogantly announced that it was closing 14 of its plants in the U.S. while building at least eleven new plants in Mexico where wages are under \$3.50 a day.

The assembly greeted the Jobs with Justice Campaign as giving a great boost to labor's fightback. It enthusiastically endorsed a resolution calling on the AFL-CIO to organize massive Jobs with Justice rallies in the Spring of 1988 along the lines of the historic Solidarity Day March in 1981.

Such a rally would manifest the strength and determination of the U.S. labor movement for a change in direction by the next President and Congress to address the real needs of American working people.

The assembly elected a continuations committee whose role is to stimulate local and regional actions against plant closings, for jobs and for an AFL-CIO-led march on Washington and San Francisco in 1988.

AFL-CIO CONVENTION • The April 25th demonstration, the Jobs with Justice Campaign, and the Assembly Against Plant Closings and for Jobs, each in their own way, exerted an influence on the 17th Convention of the AFL-CIO which took place the week of October 26th in Miami Beach, Florida.

Very much in the minds of the participants was the 1988 elections were very much on its agenda. Throughout the meeting there was a feeling of confidence that Reaganism could, and would, be defeated in the 1988 elections. This confidence was bolstered by the electoral gains of the 1986 elections when Reagan lost control of the U.S. Senate. It was further bolstered by the Senate's rejection of Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The convention convened at a moment when many difficult problems still face the trade unions. Plant closings continue. Reaganites remain in control of the National Labor Relations

Board. Many tough economic struggles are still to be won—long drawn out strikes, such as those of the Meatpackers, Paperworkers and Colt workers continue. There is also a surge in the use of strikebreakers.

At the same time, there have been some important gains in the organization of the unorganized. After 25 long years, the Kingsport Press in Tenn., was once again unionized. Although PATCO was destroyed in 1981, the air traffic controllers have reorganized and are ready to do battle over the same issues that forced them to strike in 1981.

The 17th Convention of the AFL-CIO was not marked with the drama of its predecessor. It was the 16th Convention that brought a sharp shift away from the dead-end Meanyite policies of the past on both domestic and foreign policy. Nevertheless, the 17th convention showed continued progress. The transnational corporations came under heavy attack, especially by angry delegates from auto, steel, rubber and other industries hard hit by plant closings and the loss of jobs. There was probing for a more effective trade policy. The campaign to "buy American" was a dead issue at this convention.

The alliance between labor and the Afro-American community was strengthened, as reflected in the exceptionally warm reception given NAACP leader, Benjamin Hooks, and William Clay, the Black Congressman from Missouri. Policies of grassroots mobilization were reconfirmed with emphasis on rank and file organizing committees and the building of COPE committees (Committees On Political Action) in every local union. This was done despite resistance of the Right-wing forces in the AFL-CIO, which oppose anything that might put workers into motion. The Jobs with Justice campaign also won endorsement. The general tone of the convention was anti-monopoly, anti-corporate, and anti-Reagan. This was reflected in many resolutions submitted by AFL-CIO affiliates and in the discussions on the floor of the convention.

THE TEAMSTERS RETURN • The readmission of the 1.7 million member Teamsters Union was

seen as a highlight of the convention. While the big business press smeared and sneered at this decision, progressive forces have seen it as a plus for the trade union movement. This is because it adds to the strength and unity of organized labor in the fight against the corporate offensive and the Reagan Administration. Second, with the Teamsters agreeing to "abide by the terms and conditions of the AFL-CIO constitution," the readmission is expected to greatly reduce much of the destructive raiding that has marked the past 30 years. Third, this agreement gives added protection to the Teamsters in the fight to defend against attempts by the Reagan Administration to take control of the union.

Fourth, it widens the possibilities for the opening for further trade union unification. Isn't it past time to rectify the injustice done to the United Electrical Workers and the West Coast Longshoremen, expelled by the C.I.O. at the height of the Cold War? Why not also accept the 2 million plus members of the National Education Association? That body progressed long ago from an "association of professionals," to a fighting trade union. All labor must come to the support of the United Mine Workers who are entering negotiations with giant anti-labor transnational corporations. There is considerable talk that the U.M.W. and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers are considering a merger that would create a new union in the field of energy. Such a development could only strengthen the entire trade union movement.

The mass media gave great publicity to the Teamsters being readmitted to the AFL-CIO, but virtually ignored another very important development at the convention. That was the struggle over foreign policy in which advocates of an end to U.S. aid to the Contras in Nicaragua were victorious. Right-wing forces suffered a setback at the 16th AFL-CIO convention two years ago when a resolution calling for a political rather than a military settlement in Nicaragua was adopted over their objections. However, the International Affairs Department, (IAD), the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFELD), and other Right-wing el-

ements among the top AFL-CIO leaders decided they had the right to advocate continued aid to the Contras in spite of that vote. This became one of their major activities within and outside the AFL-CIO, within and outside the U.S. As such, they enjoyed generous funding from the so-called National Endowment for Democracy and cozy relations with the C.I.A.

As a result, peace forces in labor, strengthened by the success of the April 25th March and Rally, were determined that a clear statement of opposition to aid to the Contras would emerge from the 17th Convention in Miami. The IAD, the forces around Albert Shanker, and other Right-wing elements mounted a furious campaign before the national convention to prevent this from happening.

Both public and private gatherings were organized across the country and a pro-Contra film was shown at a number of State AFL-CIO conventions. These tactics, however, backfired. The Right-wing organized meetings attracted a bare handful of unionists and the film fell flat. After it was shown at the Minnesota AFL-CIO convention, the delegates rejected the IAD position. By an overwhelming vote they sent a resolution to the Miami convention demanding an end to all aid to the Contras.

Faced with defeat at the national convention, the Right-wing maneuvered desperately. In one final effort, the IAD submitted a proposal to the Resolutions Committee calling for an end to military aid to the Contras if there was a simultaneous end to Soviet aid to the elected government of Nicaragua. They lost on that proposal as well, as the "linkage" language was stricken in committee.

Lane Kirkland tried to make the best of it by giving the floor to John T. Joyce of the Bricklayers who actively fought April 25th; Albert Shanker of the AFT; Edward Cleary, of the N.Y. State AFL-CIO Council, and several other Right-wingers who tried to link communism with reaction. Jack Sheinkman, head of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, and the only peace advocate to get the floor, cut through the rhetoric by emphasizing, "the fact remains that the AFL-CIO is on record as op-

posing aid to the Conrtras."

On other foreign policy issues—opposition to apartheid, South Africa, cutting social spending, opposition to fund "Star Wars," support for negotiations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., there was general agreement.

RIGHT-WING RETREATS • A growing understanding of the relationship of the U.S. transnational corporations to U.S. foreign policy is an important factor in labor's developing international policies. Through the ranks of labor, it has become clear that a key aspect of U.S. foreign policy is to promote the interests of the transnationals around the globe—the same transnationals that shut down factories and mills at home. At this very moment, the U.S. Navy is in the Persian Gulf, protecting U.S. owned tankers flying foreign "flags of convenience" in order to escape paying union wages to U.S. seamen and taxes to the U.S. government. This operation has already cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars while escalating the war danger in the Mideast.

These are only some examples that give living proof the soundness of the 24th Communist Party Convention report which states:

Objective developments have narrowed down the influence of the Right-wing. Thus, the grassroots influence of the Right-wing on most questions has become rather thin.

This is an important conclusion for several reasons. First, it is important to recognize the gains that have been made in the past period. Appreciating these advances is not always easy in the face of the massive anti-labor ideological offensive of the mass media which endlessly downgrades the image of the working class and its trade unions. In this campaign the media attempts to give the impression that organized labor is going nowhere. Thus it works to destroy the confidence of the working class in itself and in its unions.

Second, experience shows that it has become possible to eliminate the influence of the Right-wing as a meaningful force in the U.S. trade Union movement. This is necessary in or

der to enable the trade unions to meet their full potential.

The Right-wing, by its very nature, is always resistant to "turning the rank and file loose." Yet, this is what it took to organize basic industry in our country; it is what is needed now. And it won't happen by itself. The rank and file needs leadership.

An example of this is the issue of foreign policy. The Right-wing is hanging on for dear life. It is still in control of the International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO, daily injuring the position of the labor movement.

Tom Kahn, IAD's appointed head would like everyone to believe that only the Communists accuse his department of having relations with the C.I.A. The truth is that this relationship is well known around the world. It is easy to understand why. In every country where workers oppose U.S. transnational domination of their nation, the IAD joins with the forces of reaction—all in the name of "fighting Communism." The role of the IAD, AIFELD and other Rightwing "labor" satellites over the years in Brazil, Guyana, Chile, Guatamala, Nicaragua, Italy, France, and many other countries has been exposed repeatedly.

Unfortunately, the whole AFL-CIO is tarred by the role of the IAD. This makes it very difficult for AFL-CIO affiliates to develop the kind of honest international relations that build the level of international unity required to take on the common foe—the U.S. transnationals.

The IAD is a source of corruption both at home and abroad. It appears to have a source of unlimited funds coming from the National Endowment for Democracy, and who knows where else. At the AFL-CIO convention, a num-

ber of delegates remarked that the IAD was "spending money like water" in an effort to win over delegates.

International trade union unity and cooperation is not only a key to fighting the big transnational corporations, it is key in the fight for peace. Yet the IAD works night and day to prevent U.S. trade unions from developing relations with any union abroad that fails to meet the Right-wing standards set by the IAD

It is no wonder that an increasing number of trade unionists are demanding that the IAD be dissolved in favor of a new, democratically controlled department—a department that will support workers, not the transnationals.

But the class struggle permeates the very air we breathe. Workers hit by massive layoffs,

long term joblessness, union-busting and drastic decline in living standards are gathering their strength. The sharpness of the class struggle has created a new sense of workingclass unity. As thought patterns change in the ranks of labor an air of expectancy is emerging—of excitement. There is a growing feeling of confidence that "our time has come," "we're ready to take on the bosses."

Events in 1987 justify the call in Gus Hall's report to the 24th Convention of the CPUSA for a united working class front. We have reached the stage where it is not only possible, but necessary to work within the trade union structure—in the local unions and central labor councils. Work at the grassroots is the way to move the entire trade union movement forward. This requires hard, but very satisfying work by Communists and other progressives within the framework of a united Left. □



Matewan: The story behind the movie

Philip S. Foner

A new movie, the first in many years dealing with a labor theme, is arousing enthusiasm among American workers and sympathizers of labor in the United States. The movie is "Matewan." Written and directed by John Sayles, "Matewan" covers a little known but important event in U.S. labor history. It tells the story of the bloody and bitter confrontation between West Virginia coal miners and the companies that owned, not only the mines, but the entire state. One may quarrel with Sayles' depiction of a pacifist union organizer, the absence of any mention of the United Mine Workers of America, the union he represented, and the lack of emphasis on the tradition of racial and ethnic unity of the miners' union. However, even though it was made on a relatively small budget, the film is one of the most vivid depictions of what it meant to attempt to organize a union in the feudal-like sections of the United States before the advent of the New Deal.

What follows should make it easier for the viewer to understand what happened in the small mining community in the West Virginia hills called "Matewan."

During World War I, from 1914 to 1918, there was a tremendous increase in the coal output of the United States. The wartime activity in iron, steel, munitions and shipping absorbed much of the increased coal production. An additional demand was created by the closing of the mines in the war-torn areas of Europe. In the United States, there was a net increase of about 800 mines each year. At the same time, many old mines increased their capacity by installation of new machinery. High prices and profits drew into the industry more operators, more miners and more mines. The United Mine Workers of America grew in membership, reaching 400,000 members by 1919.

Despite these changes, however, there was one section of the industry in which very

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little changed—bloody West Virginia. World I brought great prosperity to the coal operators in West Virginia, especially in the Logan County mines. But the industrial peonage that provoked the Cabin Creek-Paint Creek strike of 1912-13 still prevailed.

Wages had by no means kept up with the increase in the cost of living. Miners were still paid in scrip, good for redemption only at company stores. They still worked ten, twelve and fourteen hours a day. Their villages were still policed by armed thugs recruited by the Baldwin-Felts strikebreaking agency, especially in Mingo, McDowell and Mercer counties.

In Logan County, Sheriff Don Chafin had replaced Baldwin-Felts men with his own army of deputies paid by the coal companies. Miners still lived in camps where the company-owned dwellings were, in the words of the U.S. Coal Commission, "old, unpainted board and batten houses—batten going or gone and board fast following, roofs broken, porches sagging; a riot of rubbish and a medley of odors were the main features."

Organizers still took their lives in their hands in counties where employers dealt with the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency rather than with the UMW. The "whole territory," Philip Murray, UMW vice-president, declared after a visit to West Virginia, "with thousands of inhabitants, is absolutely under the control of the operators. The individual is hopeless."¹ In the notorious Hitchman ruling (1917) upholding the yellow-dog contract, the Supreme Court added to that hopelessness.

Testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor disclosed that largely through holding companies and interlocking directorates, the companies controlling certain West Virginia non-union mines, namely the United States Steel Corporation and the Pennsylvania Railroad, also controlled the coal industry. The labor policies for the non-union mines were directed by U.S. Steel and the Pennsylvania Railroad—both con-

trolled by the House of Morgan.

In 1919, the miners in Mingo County decided that they had had enough, and they applied to the local United Mine Workers for a charter. When all the miners, who were identified as supporting the move, were discharged and evicted from the company houses a bloody series of strikes followed in Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Mercer counties. The mine operators immediately dispatched contingents of their private detectives, armed to the teeth with revolvers and Winchester rifles, to conduct a war against the new union members. This private army proceeded to ferret out all the organizers and active members of the union and to evict them and their families from the mining company properties. Union organizers were beaten up and thrown out of the district. But the miners informed the public:

We are going to organize these fields regardless of the opposition. Men are beaten and jailed because they have dared to ask for their constitutional rights, and get them we will.²

Late in August, 1919, union miners in the Kanawha fields, enraged by these assaults, began a march over the mountains to Logan and Mingo counties, where they hoped to shut down the non-union mines and break the iron grip of Sheriff Chafin. While some of the marchers returned home before they had advanced very far, the bulk of them—5,000 strong—crossed over into Boone County. There they were confronted by Governor John J. Cromwell, who threatened them with federal troops and charges of treason if they crossed into Logan County. This threat had the desired effect; the marchers disbanded and were brought to Charleston by special trains. The governor boasted to the press that he had broken up

. . . a deliberate plan to discard the work of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Monroe, of Lincoln, of Cleveland and . . . substitute the ideas of Karl Marx, or Nicola [sic] Lenin and Leon Trotsky.³

Assisted by the governor, gunmen continued to raid union halls in the southern counties. One of their main targets was Matewan, on the Kentucky border and known as "The home of the Hatfields and the McCoys." These two fami-

lies had been shooting at each other for years, but their bloody feud was ended by unionism.

The Hatfields and McCoys joined the UMW and were striking together when Albert Felts, the head of the Baldwin-Felts agency came to Matewan with eleven armed agents to evict those miners who had joined the strike. Young Sid Hatfield, the Matewan sheriff, and himself a former miner, refused to do the evicting; hence the influx of gunmen.

When the Baldwin-Felts gunmen appeared, Sheriff Hatfield deputized twelve men to defend the town. A McCoy was one of them. A battle broke out between the miners and the gunmen. When it was over and the smoke had cleared, three townsmen, including the mayor, and seven gunmen were dead. Among them were Albert and Lee Felts, the strikebreaking chiefs.⁴

Here John Sayles' compelling film ends. But the actual struggle continued. The "Matewan Massacre" of May 19, 1920 sparked further violence and, during July and August, more than forty men died in Mingo County alone.⁵

Hatfield and other miners were charged with murder. Art Shields, veteran labor reporter, recalled,

I entered one of the trials of the Matewan defenders in a little courtroom, where the judge sat with his back to the court and his feet on each side of the open door. All visitors, including two U.S. Senators, were frisked from ankle to neck. But the real drama was the futile attempt of the coal trust to wrest a guilty verdict from the jury

After a two-month trial, Hatfield and other miners were acquitted of the Matewan murders for lack of evidence. On August 1, 1921, however, Hatfield was assassinated by mine-guard deputies.

Hatfield's murder triggered a second march on Logan. Art Shields wrote,

Sid Hatfield was a popular hero, and men grabbed rifles all over the state. Volunteers from Ohio and Pennsylvania were among them. Many Negroes were marching. It was a sudden spontaneous uprising. Coal trains were commandeered. And several thou-

sand men were deep in enemy territory when I arrived before Labor Day, 1921. Their objective was Logan City. It was ruled by Sheriff Don Chafin who was known as the millionaire gunman. He had personally killed a dozen men, the *New York World* reported.⁶

Logan County, which Don Chafin ruled, has been described by Winthrop D. Lane as "a leer in the face of liberty, a feudal barony defended by soldiers of fortune in the pay of the mine owners."⁷

A Congressional investigation of conditions in West Virginia was in progress, but the union miners were unwilling to wait for the results. They began arming themselves and gathered in large numbers for the march into Logan County. It soon became clear that this time the operators were not going to rely on private gunmen and state militia to beat back the marchers. Their new ally was President Warren G. Harding in the White House. Brigadier-General Henry Bandholtz arrived in Marmet and warned the miners that they would face federal troops if they moved further, and that the White House had sent him to demand that they disband and return home.⁸

Mother Jones, the aged "Miners' Angel," veteran of many miners' battles and those of other workers, joined the marchers at Marmet and at first encouraged the angry miners.⁹ However, when the march threatened to get under way involving at least five thousand armed miners and thousands of defenders on the other side, she reversed her stand.

She addressed the miners at Marmet and told them that she had a telegram from President Harding requesting that the miners "abandon your purpose and return to your homes and I assure you that my good offices will be used to forever eliminate the gunmen from the state of West Virginia." the telegram was signed, "Warren G. Harding, President of this great republic." However, it was actually a "bogus" message made up by Mother Jones, who had concluded that the march would end in tragedy for the armed miners and she joined the procession simply to turn them back.

The union officials asked Mother Jones to

allow them to see the telegram but she refused. The officials then telegraphed to Washington and received a reply from President Harding's secretary stating that the president had sent no such telegram to Mother Jones, and they so informed a committee of the miners' army. This exposure of her deception seriously influenced Mother Jones' influence with the miners.¹⁰

Although the urgings of other union leaders temporarily halted the march on Logan, it was resumed after a week. Meanwhile, men and boys were armed with rifles of every description, including many high-powered guns, army Springfield rifles and similar weapons, and workers walked about with two pistols strapped to their waists. Machine guns were mounted on automobiles. Other miners, carried Browning rapidfire guns which they had used during World War I in France. Red Cross nurses arrived in improvised automobile units, a large red cross marked on their sleeve bands, while on their caps they had sewn "UMW".

Food supplies were commandeered, military passes stamped with the union seal were issued, and doctors were ordered to accompany the "workers' army and care for the wounded.

However, the marchers never made it to Logan. In the early stage of the battle, the miners were victorious. The ill-assorted army of Baldwin-Felts thugs, state police and anti-union vigilantes, were routed by the miners' army.

So complete was the rout that, in a rage, Sheriff Don Chapin ordered two aviators who had been acting as air scouts to carry hastily constructed bombs of large size, made of gas mains loaded with powder, chunks of iron and glass containers filled with poison gas. "Chafin's aviators," as they were called, then bombed four union villages in three days and dropped twenty bombs. Of these only eight exploded. They tore great holes in the earth but did not hit any dwellings or people. However, it was no fault of the aviators that none, including women and children, were hit. They flew too high to aim accurately, forced to do so by the highpowered rifles of the miners who were sent back from the march to protect the villages.¹¹

Later, Art Shields, who covered the battle for the Federated Press, and visited the villages

that had been bombed, told Mother Jones of his amazement that such things as:

... airplane bombings of miners' villages could happen in America.

Mother Jones looked at me in surprise. "Don't you know where you are?" she said. "This is the place where they have been murdering men and women since labor first began taking coal out of the ground in West Virginia."¹²

While the miners' villages were being bombed by "Chafin's aviators," federal troops arrived in the battle area. Six thousand soldiers, assisted by twenty airplanes under the command of Brigadier-General Billy Mitchell, were ready to prevent the union miners from entering the nonunion county. For two days—September 2 and 3, 1921—the "Battle of Blair Mountain" raged as armed union miners fought the U.S. Army, the infant air force, local deputy sheriffs and private gunmen. On September 4, the miners surrendered and were disarmed. Three deputies had been killed; forty local gunmen were wounded, and one of the six air service planes had crashed, killing four aviators. Union casualties were never revealed.¹³

The *Industrial Worker*, official organ of the IWW, compared the miners of West Virginia to the citizens of Paris who "took up arms in 1871 against their oppressors." In the same tradition,

the miners of West Virginia took up arms to defend themselves against brigands and murderers. War has been declared by the coal operators and the government of the United States against working men who are American citizens, because they will not bow their necks to the authority which would enslave them.¹⁴

The Messenger, the Black socialist monthly, published by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, declared editorially:

The coal monarchs seem to be monarchs of all they survey. Even the President of the nation dares not challenge their ruthless rule. The workers of Mingo are just as much the subjects of the coal kings, as were the mujiks of Russia under the Czar. They, like

the Negro slave, have no rights which their masters are bound to respect.¹⁵ It is also interesting to note in this connection that there are both white and black workers in this imperial preserve. Another case where race prejudice goes a-flying before the avenging wrath of the God of Private Profits.¹⁶

A special grand jury at Logan immediately began to investigate the miners' march. In charging the jury, Judge Brand declared that if it found that the armed miners had marched into Logan County "in defiance of the law," any person in the march might be indicted for "murder in the first degree" for the deaths which had taken place.

On September 17, the grand jury brought in indictments against five hundred members and officers of the United Mine Workers for "murder, insurrection and carrying arms." The five hundred men included three UMW officials, who were immediately dismissed by President John L. Lewis.

William Blizzard, president of Subdistrict 4, District 17, UMW, was acquitted of the charge of treason on May 27, 1922, but the Reverend J.E. Wilbur, the "miners' pastor," and his son were convicted of second degree murder in trials held during the spring and summer of 1922.

In legal battles over the next two years, most of the charges against the other defendants were dismissed, or they were either acquitted or paroled. In 1923, Governor Ephraim E. Morgan released those miners who were still imprisoned and who had families.

The released men returned to the same conditions which had provoked the bloody uprisings. However, Frank Keeney, the local UMW organizer told a reporter:

They say we shall not organize West Virginia. They were mistaken. If Frank Keeney can't do it, someone will take his place who can. But West Virginia will be organized and it will be organized completely.¹⁸

And West Virginia was organized! In 1932, the Norris-LaGuardia Act became law. In addition to imposing limits on the judiciary in labor disputes, the law forbade the yellow-dog contracts which had served as the foundation for the Hitchman ruling in 1917 and the Red Jacket ruling in 1927 by the Supreme Court. These

stemmed from West Virginia cases and played a major role in the successful effort of the coal operators to defeat the UMW during the 1920s.

In 1933, armed with the National Industrial Recovery Act's Section 7(a), the United Mine Workers surged into the coal fields to organize the miners of West Virginia, and within a few years, Keeney's prophecy was fulfilled.

On November 1, 1921, the *United Mine Workers Journal* quoted the following from the *Baltimore Evening Sun* which described the bitter struggles in Matewan as having "revolved principally around the question as to the right of the miners in the non-union fields to organize"

The *Sun* continued:

But the fight has not been a fair one. Through the power of their money these operators have brazenly bought up the politicians of the State. Through their control of successive State administrations they have controlled the law offices and controlled the courts. Paid private detectives and plug-uglies employed by them as spies and mine guards, with the aid of deputy sheriffs paid from out of the mine companies' treasuries, have ruthlessly brushed aside every constitutional guarantee claimed by the miners as to the right of peaceable assemblage, as to the right of free speech and even as to the right of jury trial—all in an effort to crush every attempt on the part of the miners to organize.

These are not empty charges. They have been supported time and again by evidence collected by Congressional investigating committees. To say that there can be industrial peace or peace of any kind in West Virginia under such conditions is to assume that the state is ripe for slavery . . .

This being the case, have not the American people as a whole the right to demand that the Constitution be definitely reestablished in West Virginia? That the system of private enforcement of the law—or what the private companies choose to regard as the law—be abolished, and that an honest effort be made to get at the root of the trouble . . . ? How about using the same authority to suppress the lawlessness of the mine owners as well, and to enforce both sides to an agreement? □

Notes

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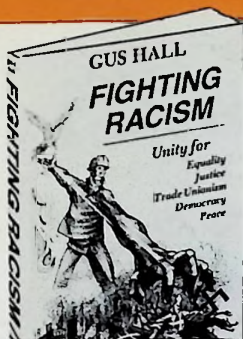
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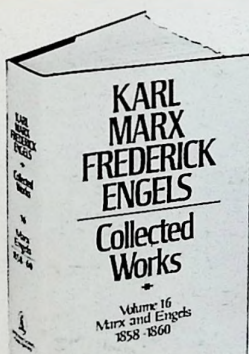
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