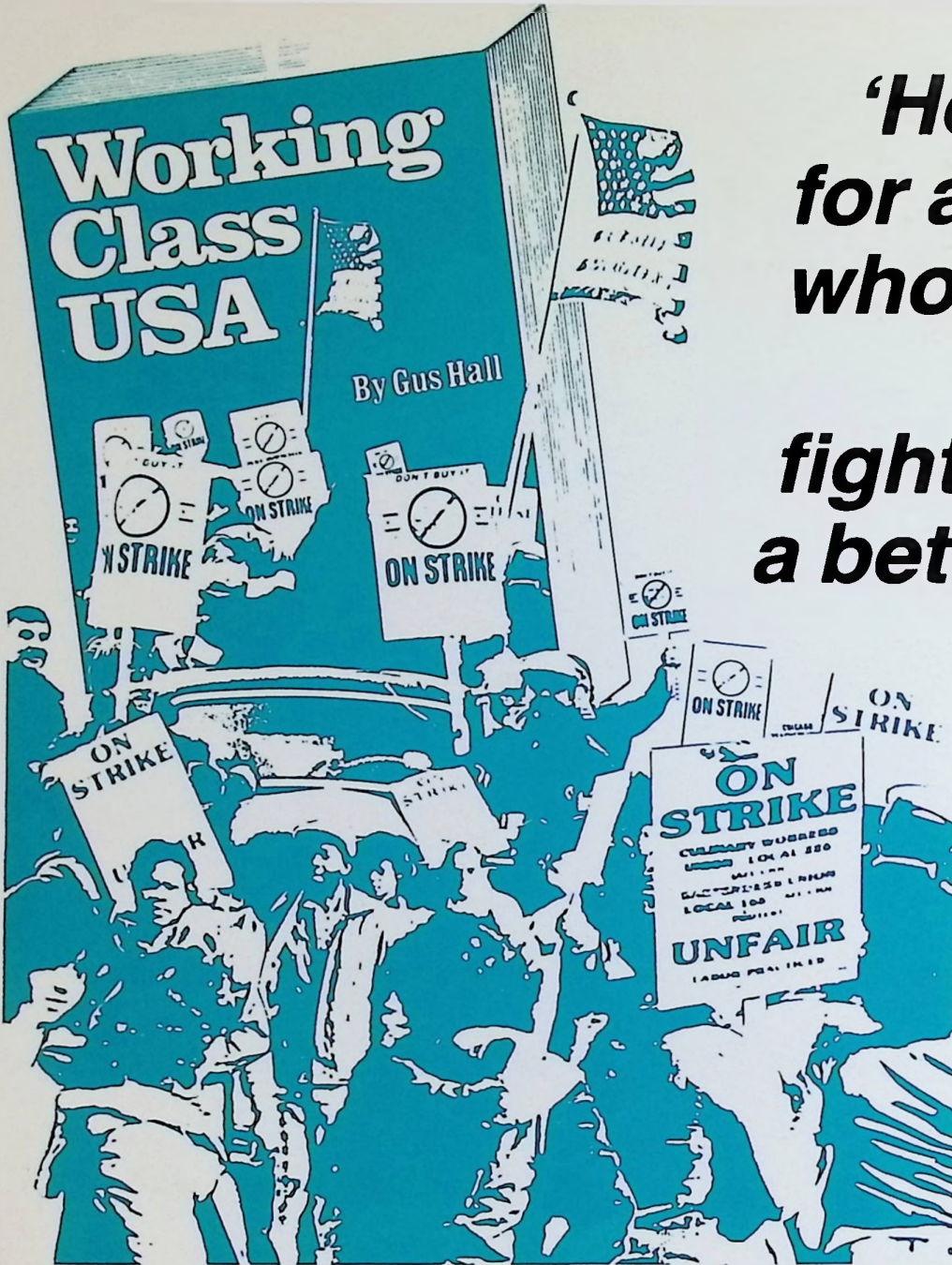




- MEETING THE DAY CARE CRISIS
Fern Winston
- WILSON'S APOLOGIES FOR RACISM
Tony Monteiro
- HEROIC WOMEN OF
THE McCARTHY YEARS
Vivian Ranieri
- PEACE AND
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Women, Workers & the Fight for Equality

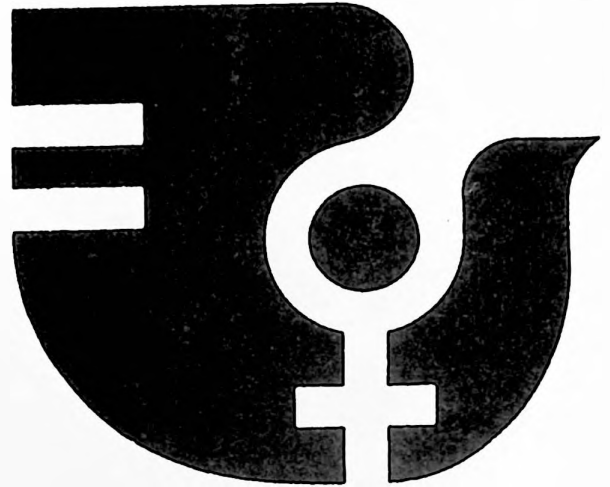
On March 8th millions of people around the world will celebrate International Women's Day, 1988. It is observed in all corners of the globe and the people in our country can be especially proud that this holiday, like May Day, is stamped "made in the USA." Like all things that have ever been "produced" anywhere, it was given to us by the working class.

Laboring under inhuman conditions in sweatshops in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, women from many different national backgrounds joined together to stage a protest march in Rutgers Square on March 8th, 1908. Their march demanded the right to vote and expressed support for the new and struggling needle-trades unions. Their action gave huge impetus to the entire women's movement. So successful was the protest that similar rallies were later organized in other U.S. cities, as well as abroad.

Two years afterward, Clara Zetkin, the well known socialist and working-class leader of Germany offered a motion at the International Socialist Congress to declare March 8th International Women's Day.

Nearly 80 years later, a broad social spectrum of women and men across the globe continue to join hands on this date, in international solidarity, to demand complete equality for women. And now, as then, while the women's movement unites this wide cross-section of people, working women remain the main engine of this urgent struggle.

While in 1908, women were concentrated in a few industries, today, they comprise more than 44 percent of the total work-force in the U.S. In our country 50.6 million women work. Given such figures, the struggle for women's equality, is vital to all efforts to enlarge the trade union movement, to halt plant shutdowns or to build the independent political strength of labor.



Consider this simple fact—women in our country earn 70 cents for every dollar earned by men. That 30-cent gap is a reflection of all that is unequal between men and women in our society, whether they work or not. The gap also swells the huge profits of the owners of industry and drives them to fight ferociously to prolong this inequality.

Nor is the 30-cent gap a problem of women alone. It lurks in the reduced income of millions of families and is an important ingredient of our nation's growing level of poverty and hunger, affecting men, women and children. In the national labor market, discriminatory wages for women shrink the wages of all workers.

It is, therefore, no accident that male supremacy, draped in the old slogan of returning to "traditional" family values, has become a center piece of the Rightwing's anti-labor assault.

Nor should it be a surprise that the solutions to this inequality have become so crucial to the labor movement as a whole.

Around labor and the Afro-American peoples movement the people of our country are working to unite in a common front against the Right-wing, for progress, peace and democracy. In this coalition women workers play a special

role. They are the link between the women's movement as a whole and the labor movement.

Victims of inequality, women are a special link between the Afro-American peoples movement, which demands and needs affirmative action and the masses of white workers, nearly half of whom also feel the special sting of discrimination.

Is it any wonder then, that women workers today, as in 1908, should remain the most vital contingent of this important movement?

Today there are more than 2,000 women's organizations in the United States. These organizations are in small towns and large cities throughout the country. Except for the few which endorse the "Right to Life" movement, these organizations agree on most issues.

Common ground can be found among the majority of women on the need for an expanded system of child care, for paternal leave, pay equity, health care, housing and full reproductive rights. Many would also agree that the military budget should be cut to pay for these programs.

Naturally, there are also some differences on how to win these programs that are demanded by the majority of our nation's women. To solve this problem, Communists have a unique contribution, emphasizing the unity of women with the labor and Afro-American peoples movement—and the special role of workingclass women.

Commenting on this, Gus Hall, National Chairman of the Communist Party, USA has said

In the struggle for equality, it is important to take note of the fact that the American woman is the most working-class of any in the capitalist world. Any attempt to deal with the struggle for equality of women as a thing in itself, separated from the over-all struggle, is self defeating—it becomes a classless dead end.

A powerful and effective document in the struggle for equality is the The Women's Bill of Rights offered by the Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE). It links the struggle

for equality with the improvement of the conditions of all working people. It is being welcomed and is gaining wide support in many areas across the country.

Today our working class has before it many urgent issues. One of the most pressing is the crisis of child care, a demand emphasized in the Women's Bill of Rights and raised by a wide cross current of women and trade unions. Child care is a problem that literally affects the future of our nation.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women has initiated a demonstration, called the American Family Celebration, for May 14, 1988 in Washington D.C. The demands of this demonstration include child care, parental leave, pay equity, and an expanded national system of health care. The demonstration has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO, hundreds of local unions, women's and religious organizations. Unity all the groups willing to work for these demands will inspire an outpouring of major significance.

This in turn, will help to cement further the unity of the working class and progressive movement—a unity that can play a critical role in the coming 1988 elections.

The Women's Bill of Rights can be an important factor in the American Family Celebration: first as a clarifying and mobilizing instrument and then as the basis of a platform for unity of the movement as a whole.

There can be no greater contribution to the struggle for full equality of women on this year's International Women's Day than an all-out effort to guarantee the success of the American Family Celebration as part of a general resolve to step up the struggle for complete equality of women the world over. □

Read Political Affairs

THE WOMEN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

- 1 ★ The right to live in peace means nuclear disarmament, nonintervention by the U.S. in other countries and an end to militarization of our economy and society.
- 2 ★ The right to live in a peace-oriented society, redirecting the military budget to a budget for human needs and converting military production to civilian production.
- 3 ★ The right to employment at a living wage, including affirmative action to end discrimination, equal pay for equal or comparable worth; paid parental leave and safe working conditions.
- 4 ★ The right to organize without interference into trade unions to enable the labor movement to represent the interest of all workers.
- 5 ★ The right to a decent standard of living through Social Security benefits, pensions and a guaranteed income.
- 6 ★ The right of every child to nurturing and full development, including federally funded, nonracist, nonsexist childcare and public education from preschool through college.
- 7 ★ The right to a federally funded national health care system, based on preventative medicine to include pre- and post-natal care, geriatrics and industrial medicine.
- 8 ★ The right to reproductive freedom, including federally funded birth control and abortion upon demand, sex education and an end to experimentation and sterilization abuse.
- 9 ★ The right to live in decent, affordable housing, including government-funded construction and subsidies.
- 10 ★ The right to a safe environment, free from toxic wastes and industrial pollution.
- 11 ★ The right to a culture that reflects our multinational history and multilingual character and to society free from racist and sexist violence and degrading images of women.
- 12 ★ The right to participate in the fully democratic process guaranteed by the Constitution, especially the right to vote.

Meeting the Day Care Crisis

FERN WINSTON

On October 19, 1929 the stock market plunged; along with it, the living conditions of tens of millions of Americans.

Unemployment and hunger swept the nation. Protests for jobs and relief swept the country. Hunger marchers criss-crossed our state capitals. Hunger, the protesters said, is not just a problem of those in crisis, but a crisis for the entire nation.

President Herbert Hoover denied this, just as President Reagan, also confronted with a terrible rise in hunger, does today. Despite the realities of starvation and crisis, Hoover claimed that the American people could look forward to having two chickens in every pot and a car in every garage.

But the reality was that only protest and struggle could alleviate the suffering. In this situation the Communist Party came upon the scene in a mass way. It helped to organize a mass wave of united struggle. This mass movement laid the foundations for the victories soon to be won for jobs, unemployment compensation, social security and relief.

These benefits have, for many years, been a part of life in the U.S. We have come to take them for granted. And yet, today they are under sharp attack.

A new kind of crisis is growing in our country. Plants that stood for decades are suddenly being closed, and with them the cities that housed the people that worked these jobs. Budget cuts are slashing needed benefits and hunger is again on the rise. Families, hard pressed to solve what the government now refuses to solve, are being stretched to their limits. The resulting crisis especially hits the children.

With a declining real income per worker many families are finding that they simply cannot exist without more members working. In some families, low income combined with

household breakups are creating a new kind of dilemma—how does one work for minimal wages, pay for child care and eat at the same time. For many the task is insurmountable.

Today, with 70 percent of women between the ages of 24 and 54 in the work force, child care has become a problem of crisis proportions. According to a statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council in February, 1986, there are 24 million children under the age of 13 who are left at home with either minimal makeshift supervision or with no care while their parents work.

According to the AFL-CIO in 1984, the median income of two-parent households with two children was \$25,338. Yet the cost of day care for two children is, on the average, \$6,000.

The median income of single parent families in 1984 was \$12,803. This means that the cost for day care for one child would be 25 percent of the entire family income and 50 percent for two children. For a person earning the minimum wage of \$6,968 a year, day care costs would take up all of the family income.

The AFL-CIO statement concludes that, for all families, the problem of availability and affordability of child care has become an issue of "crisis proportions."

The only child care legislation enacted in recent years was passed by the Congress in 1971. The proposal, however, was vetoed by President Nixon who claimed that the enactment of such a comprehensive child care bill would destroy the U.S. family and lead to "Sovietization" of child rearing in this country.

In her column in the Washington Post (11/20/87), Judy Mann comments,

American children of working parents have not been "Sovietized." They have had to come home to empty houses, they have been left in unlicensed crowded day care centers, and they have simply been left home alone when impoverished parents had to go to work. Children have been killed and abused in day care, and they have died alone at home.

Fern Winston is chairwoman of the Women's Equality Commission, CPUSA.

The crisis brought about by the lack of comprehensive, affordable, quality child care concerns not only working parents, but the entire labor movement. In many instances child care has become an issue in collective bargaining. Some unions have organized their own child care centers. But despite some advances, only an estimated 1,800 to 2,000 employers out of six million provide child-care assistance. And this assistance ranges from providing actual child care to merely organizing lunch-hour seminars on child care availability, or in some cases, supplying vouchers to provide a part of the cost of day care when it can be found.

According to the New York chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, (CLUW),

Bargaining for child care does not eliminate or diminish the need for political action to secure sufficient public funding and appropriate regulation of child-care facilities. Unless child care exists in a community, employer-provided subsidies will assist only a small number of workers. If state building and health codes are lax, permitting substandard centers to exist, working parents will endure the added stress of constant concern for their children's welfare.

What has been the response of federal and state officials to the crisis? President Reagan, in a recent State of the Union, devoted a significant amount of time to so-called "family issues." Not even a mention of child care was made in this speech. Instead, under the guise of concern for the family, the President pressed such Rightwing anti-family concepts as curtailment of women's reproductive rights, so-called welfare reform and reintroduction of prayer in school. Along with this the President again attempted to put the burden of the deteriorating schools on the family, urging students to simply "study harder."

This approach, however, is now widely rejected. Reflecting the growing demands by labor, for example, New York Governor Mario Cuomo, in his 1988 State of the State speech felt compelled to take a different tact. He said, "Efforts on behalf of families of children are no longer just a matter of self interest . . . they are

a matter of economic survival." The governor characterized the next ten years as "The Decade of the Child."

Thus, he called for better health care for children and for state wide pre-kindergartens for four year olds. He also urged an expansion of child care for "working families who are poor." These initiatives should be greeted as tentative steps in the right direction. However, it should be noted that the governor also cautioned voters not to expect help from the federal government to bring these programs to life. This caution, as much as it is reflective of the reactionary positions of the Reagan administration, must be rejected. Longterm solutions to the day care crisis are not possible without a greater role for the federal government.

According to the AFL-CIO study mentioned above, while there has been some progress in providing child care on the state level, only 25 percent of the states have put in place some kind of child care program. Thirty-five states provided care for fewer children in 1985 than in 1981. Thus the labor organization also noted with concern and alarm that the federal government was not playing an adequate role in the solution of the problem. It added that action on the federal level is likely to be negligible.

The notion that we must no longer rely on federal funding for such things as child care has also found its way into some women's organizations. The fact that the federal government can act quickly when it wants to, or is forced to, however, was shown during world war II. During that war, under the Latham Act of 1942, Congress provided grants to states to set up child-care centers for children of mothers working in wartime industries. Within months, our nation was retooled for a higher level of production and a new level of child care. These centers were closed, however, when the war ended—not because they had to be closed, but because business—and through it, the federal government—found it more profitable to keep women as a reserve army of unemployed rather than a full and equal part of the labor force.

Closely linked with the lack of child care is the question of so-called welfare "reform." Pres-

ident Reagan is an advocate of such "reform," as are many state governors.

One of the most prominent advocates of these changes is New York U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson appointed Moynihan, then assistant Secretary of Labor, to chair a committee to investigate and report on conditions in the Afro-American community. This report later became known as the Moynihan Report.

The main thrust of the report was the claim that Black communities are a "tangle of pathologies." In essence Moynihan attributed the unequal conditions existing in the Black community to the structure of the Black family. This racist report became known as the policy of "benign neglect."

Senator Moynihan claims that the purpose of welfare "reform" is to make it possible for mothers on public assistance to break away from a life of welfare "dependency" to a life of "independence" by entering the mainstream of society. This according to the theory can be done by giving recipients a job.

There are now two welfare reform bills before Congress, one in the House of Representatives and Senator Moynihan's bill in the Senate. There are some differences in the bills, but in essence they both require women on welfare with children, age three or over, be forced to accept work, despite the conditions of work, or lose welfare assistance.

Both bills provide for an unspecified period of job training, health coverage and child care with payments furnished in amounts far below the actual cost of largely non-existent child care.

The bill contains no guarantee that the jobs these women might find would be anything other than minimum wage or sub-minimum wage jobs. These bills also have a racist thrust, reflected in the fact that Black and Hispanic women face the crisis problems presented by poverty and lack of child care in disproportionate numbers. As such they also, disproportionately, face the punitive aspects of these bill.

Either of these bills, if enacted, would pose a threat to the entire labor movement. In their

essence they are aimed, not at helping the victims of poverty but to provide a cheap labor force for employers bent on weakening the labor movement. Thus, these bills would allow some employers to fatten their profits while deepening and widening the level of poverty in the country.

In a column in the *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1987, Tom Wicker wrote,

[O]f the 10.8 million Americans who lost their jobs owing to plant dislocations and a slack economy between January, 1981 and January, 1986 nearly a third were still unemployed at the ends of that period—and more than 50 percent were working at new jobs for less than 80 percent of their previous salaries. A tenth held part time jobs only.

Wicker further pointed out that "41.25 of all poor people over the age of 14 had a job in 1986" and that "the working poor were the fastest growing segment of poverty population."

The New York Times, in an editorial on Nov. 14, 1986, stated,

To build up the hopes of struggling young families only to leave them in a frustrating bind does them no favor. Unless society provides a plausible way out of that bind any talk of shrinking the welfare rolls is just that — talk.

The AFL-CIO News, in an editorial on Dec. 19, 1987, while giving qualified support to welfare reform, pointed out, "the most effective welfare reform would be a full employment economy" It went on to add,

[F]ood stamps and family health care are a part of the survival package that the present welfare system provides. It is unrealistic to expect a parent to abandon this support system for a minimum wage job. Welfare reform requires that gainful employment be an improvement over dependency.

Clearly, most women on welfare would prefer to be working. But they are entitled to jobs at union wages with union protection. Schemes to exploit welfare recipients disguised as welfare "reform" only add to the number of the working poor in our country, as has happened in those states where workfare systems

were enacted. One should also add that any program aimed at putting unemployed parents back to work must also be accompanied with the enactment of a national, comprehensive, quality, affordable child-care system.

The issue of child care has now been placed on the nation's agenda. Long pressed by the people's movement, it has finally become part of the program of most of the Democratic presidential candidates. It is the subject of hundreds of child advocate conferences taking place in the country. Child care was the topic of a meeting of the Democratic caucus held on January 26, 1988 in West Virginia. At that caucus, speaker after speaker stressed the point that for women to leave the welfare rolls they would have to be assured that they would be provided with quality child care, and that they must be guaranteed a real job. To those who spoke of the money to fund such a comprehensive program, Bana Freedman, a child care advocate and activist, told the gathering that for several years she had been traveling across the country, meeting with parents, with workers at plant gates and child care advocate groups. She reported that when the question of funding arose, many people told her that funding should be no problem in a rich country such as the United States. With the exception of South Africa, ours is the only industrialized country in the world that does not have a child care program. She reported that many said that the billions of dollars now being spent on Star Wars, MX missiles and other nuclear weapons should be spent on child care, housing and the things working parents need.

Even the conservative Senator Orin G. Hatch has been compelled to recognize the need for child care, and has introduced his own bill. In announcing it, Senator Hatch stated,

While I personally believe that children would be helped much more by having a full-time parent, I realize that it is wishful thinking to expect a significant return to "Ozzie and Harriet" type families.

He then went on to say,

The question is not so much if government should be involved in alleviating the myriad of problems related

to child care but rather how.

Offering his own concept of child care, Hatch said his bill

. . . is based on the premise that a government can be a catalyst for state, local, and private sector child care projects, but not the sole means of support for them. It would be a mistake for Congress to establish yet another federal program which permitted "project addition" to federal funds, just as it would be a mistake to absolve parents, churches, businesses and other local organizations from responsibility for expanding and improving child care programs in their own neighborhoods.

Thus, while advocating a child care system in words, Hatch opposes it in deeds. Rather than offering any real program, Hatch offers a legal argument for others to assume responsibility. Boiled down to its essence, the Hatch proposal is an attempt to derail child-care legislation being offered in Congress by others.

Since President Nixon vetoed the child care bill passed by the Congress in 1971, there has been no child care legislation enacted, other than some measures which provided tax credits against child-care costs. These measures mainly benefited middle class parents, leaving the majority of those in need without help. A bill introduced in the Senate last year, S1885, entitled The Act for Better Child Care, would fund more day-care slots, help families pay for day care and set minimum federal standards for it.

The sponsors claim that the bill is backed by 95 national organizations. The cost is 2.5 billion dollars. The sponsors were reported to be concerned about the cost, but felt that the "child care crisis" warranted the spending.

U.S. Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT) has introduced a child-care bill with 25 co-sponsors. Called the Act For Better Child Care Services, it would put 75 percent of its funding into financial assistance to working parents with incomes of up to 115 percent of their state median income. It also calls for development of minimum federal child care standards and a 20 percent state match to federal funds. It also provides grants and loans to expand child-care programs, train workers, create information

and referral services, monitor programs and enforce standards.

While this legislation offers measures that are far from the universal comprehensive child care program that our nation needs, it does help to place the crisis before the Congress. Unfortunately, despite growing alarm over the crisis among masses of working people, there remains little movement on these bills on Capital Hill.

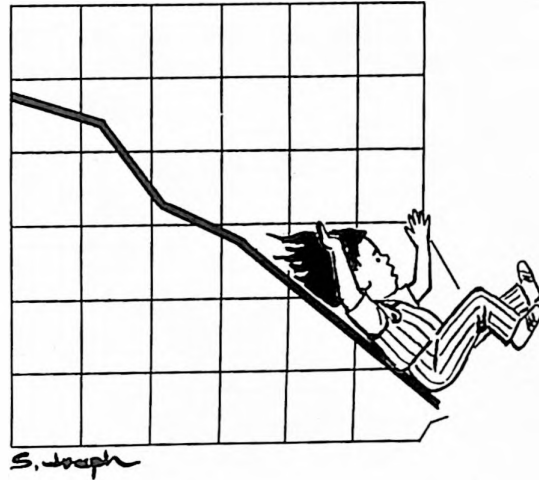
Recently, the *Newsline For Summer*, publication of The Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, printed an assessment of child care provisions and family policies in several capitalist and socialist countries. It found that only the United States, among all the countries surveyed, failed to provide any real comprehensive child care. All socialist countries surveyed did provide such facilities at either minimal or no cost to parents.

While the Communist Party must continue to work in coalition with others in the communities and work places to win every reform possible, no matter how small, it states that the only real solution to the child care crisis in the United States is the enactment of national, comprehensive, quality, affordable child care system. In the party's view, child care is a right and should be available to every family, as an inherent part early childhood education. Child care centers should be staffed by trained teachers and medical staff personnel.

Whereas the problem of child care is above all a working class problem, the leading role of the trade unions in this struggle is of particular importance.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women has initiated a call for a demonstration in Washing-

ton on May 14, 1988 on the issues of child care, parental leave, pay equity, elder care, and other women's and working class issues. This demonstration has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO, many central labor councils, local unions, women's, religious, Afro-American, Hispanic, youth



and other organizations.

This demonstration can be a very important step in the struggle to win a solution to this pressing problem.

In the past year many have come forward to argue that the federal government cannot be pressed to grant a real solution to this problem. Life and experience shows otherwise. In the wake of the Great Depression the unity of the people compelled government to grant what many said it would never grant—unemployment compensation, social security and other reforms.

It is time, for the sake of our future, to unite and demand a solution to our nation's day care crisis. □

Heroic Women of the McCarthy Years

VIVIAN RAINERI

The Cold War years of the late 1940s and 1950s is a time shrouded in shadows—shadows of fear, hurt and anger.

What is also a truth of that time, however, is that it was a time of resistance and this, I believe, is the most important truth and one that needs to be better exposed.

We know and celebrate the stories of defiance and resistance as exemplified by the Hollywood Ten and by the Communist Party leaders imprisoned under the Smith Act. For many years, now, it has been possible to read published material about these cases.

Today there is an *atmosphere* for telling and listening to a great deal more of this history. Books are being published, old books are being dusted off, papers are being written and oral histories taped.

The young are intensely curious about this hidden history, and that is important. It is peoples' history and it should be saved. And, for narrative in the first-person, time is passing; there is an urgency to get it recorded.

It is difficult for young people who were then unborn to understand the Cold War period and to sense the extent and fury of the hysteria that gripped the country. However, in the light of current revelations of the secret government operating from the White House basement that understanding may come more easily.

After all, the 1987 White House conspirators planned to suspend the Constitution and declare martial law in case of a "national emergency" that *they* would define. In every sense, we have had a military junta operating from Reagan's basement. All in the name of combatting communism.

It was in the name of "containing communism" after World War II, that the U.S. government and its agencies unleashed a reign of terror across the nation until, as David Cauter

wrote in *The Great Fear*, the nation was "sweat-drenched in fear." So it isn't just that it's a good story, and people like a good story, that we record Cold War history. Along with the stories we seek the lessons.

The major impetus to expose the truth is concern with world peace and the right of peoples to choose their own destinies. "Containing communism" was the official policy toward the Soviet Union and the newly emerging democracies after World War II. Today it is in the name of combatting communism that the Nicaraguan people are being subjected to horror and torment.

The U.S. military-industrial complex sought to "contain communism" even if it meant another world war right after the anti-fascist victory of World War II when the U.S. and the USSR were allies. The pressures and the terrorization to which the U.S. people were subjected—all in the name of fighting communism—made it a unique time in our history. Nobody was immune, nobody was safe, not even the U.S. army, the Boy Scouts or the Parent Teachers Association. The people had to be brainwashed and, for a time and to a large extent, they were.

Exposure of the truths of that time—all of them from the despicable ("It was the time of the toad," Lillian Hellman said) to the courageous—are relevant and important to the continuing defense of civil liberties and political rights in the United States. The truth is a weapon, it gives us power. It makes it difficult for brainwashing to work, for building a national mentality to accept a police state or military rule.

The truth shows us courage and human frailty. It tells us that we must "stick together" to counter the repressors and the "toads" and draw upon our "comradeship"—or, if we are hesitant to use that word because it may tend to incriminate us—we can use another. The point is not to allow ourselves to become isolated.

This is a paper delivered at the West Coast Marxist Scholars Conference, November 1987.

So it is of great value, on a number of levels, to tell the stories, to pierce the shadows.

I have travelled across the country several times, collecting stories of women's experiences during the Cold War years. They will eventually end up in a book.

WHY IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO DO A BOOK about women's experiences? We preserve them as peoples' history, more specifically, it is *women's history* and needs to be *illuminated*. Furthermore, I have become increasingly convinced that it needs to be *celebrated*. There was so much hardship and terror. What is to be celebrated is how these women coped; how they held things together, including political movements; initiated campaigns; protected and maintained their families; fought for their children, their own and others; battled for their own and other's civil liberties and rights; and challenged and stood up to the Cold War inquisitors.

What is to be told, too, is how they were hurt and victimized; how they missed their men when their men were in prison or away in the underground; their own experiences in the underground; how they supported each other and maintained the human ability to laugh and forge warm relationships in the face of tenacious persecution and constant FBI harassment.

Very few of these women are famous. They worked in movements and they worked virtually alone; they were in cities and on farms; in the arts, trade unions, in politics, civil liberties and civil rights organizations. Many are still politically active, some are not. They were in all parts of the country; they were of all colors and nationalities.

On June 25, 1950, North Korea was invaded by U.S. puppet troops of Syngman Rhee. This was to be the opening wedge for U.S. domination of China and Asia—for "containing communism." It was called a "police action." It was basically no different than the role we played in Vietnam.

The Stockholm Peace Appeal was signed on March 19, 1950 by world leaders, headed by Frederic Joliet Curie. By the end of June it was being signed by millions all over the world, including the U.S. Many attribute the U.S. decision not to use the bomb in Korea to the wide international support for the Peace Appeal.

The Appeal, which the FBI classified as subversive—even treasonous—said:

- We demand the absolute banning of the atom weapon as an arm of terror and mass extermination of populations.
- We demand the establishment of strict international control to ensure the implementation of this ban.
- We consider that any government which will be the first to use the atom weapon against any country whatsoever will be committing a crime against humanity and should be dealt with as a war criminal.
- We call upon all men of good will to sign this appeal.

(At the end of the movie, *The Way We Were*, when Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford's paths briefly cross, it was the Stockholm Peace Petition that Streisand and other women were gathering signatures to.)

At the outset of the Korean War, an organization was formed on the East coast, called *American Women for Peace* (AWP), whose main leadership was Black women. (This organization is not to be confused with Women's Strike for Peace or Women for Peace formed later, in 1961.) The AWP is not in the history books. It is unknown even by the peace movement of today. The new organization issued a Call and organized a delegation of grass-roots organizations to go to Washington to urge President Truman to mediate the Korean War, to halt the danger of a new world war and to demand that atom and hydrogen bombs never be used by the U.S. government.

The Call linked issues. It said,

War taxes threaten to wipe out gains of millions of workers . . . Profiteers, taking advantage of death in Korea, are raising prices of food, clothing and other necessities, bringing them beyond the reach of millions.

More than 1,000 women from 12 states were met in Washington, D.C. by FBI agents. They trailed the women to a church where, inside, a Black mother stood with folded arms and told a government official:

I'm glad you are here. You may not have had a Negro mother but you are the son of a woman and therefore must have some interest in the protest of women. . .

Sir, we are here to speak of our grievances. Our men are lynched, beaten, shot deprived of jobs and, on top of that, are forced to become part of a Jim Crow army and go thousands of miles to Korea to carry war to other colored peoples.

And so the fight against racism and for justice at home was joined to the fight for peace.

ON THE VERY DAY THE KOREAN WAR BEGAN, in a city park in Minneapolis, a large family was holding its annual reunion. "Ingrid" had, on previous days, obtained many signatures to the Peace Petition. On this day, as she began to circulate it, members of her family, obviously upset, immediately gathered up their things and left.

Her husband, she related, who "didn't like my being involved" in political matters attempted to get custody of their two teenage children in a divorce proceeding, claiming she was an unfit mother because of her politics. One of her brothers testified against her. A sister told the court:

My sister appears to be away from home a great deal of the time when I have tried to contact her by phone she is always in a hurry to go to this meeting or that meeting.

Circulation of the Stockholm Petition, they claimed, proved that she was "sympathetic toward the Communist Party."

When the judge awarded her custody of the children, it made the headlines and all the names were published. She lost her job; her daughter lost her afterschool job. She had four loyal strong sisters who supported her, but the

family, as a whole, was estranged for years.

Ingrid did housework. She got a succession of jobs at small places. The FBI would come around and she was fired—"Just out of the blue, they wouldn't need me any more."

A garment shop advertised a job at 75 cents an hour. She lied that she had experience and she was hired. She did okay until the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB) held hearings in Washington, D.C. on the request of the Justice Department to classify the American Peace Crusade as a Communist front." The long arm of an informer reached from the nation's capital to Minneapolis and the recital of names included hers.

A newspaper was being passed around when she reported for work that day. There was a lot of whispering, nobody talked to her. She recalled:

[In mid-afternoon,] I was standing by the table, matching up work and a Black woman, a presser, said: "Well Ingrid, it's time for our break, isn't it."

I thought, "Oh what an angel." She was the only one who dared speak to me . . . I thought that was the most courageous, wonderful thing.

Not long after that, the foreman told her not to come to work the next day, her work was unsatisfactory. She knew, "I had to fight. I had two kids."

Then, for the first time, Ingrid had a means of fighting back on the job. The union made the difference. She went to the business agent of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union and, with the union's help, she ultimately won her job back. She worked there for 20 years.

Ingrid is a soft-spoken, gentle woman. Even after so many years, under the surface, she carries a lot of repressed hurt and anger. Her family again holds reunions but they never speak of political matters.

Ingrid says,

It was an awful thing—we push it away now. Oh, there was fear, but you didn't have time to give in to it. I mean, you don't give up the struggle, you can't . . . you don't feel right.

All across the country there were women

like this. They did what they had to do. They didn't see another choice.

IN THE SAME CITY, A PTA ACTIVIST, mother of three small children, took part in a telephone poll on how people felt about the Soviet Union. She said, "I think it is time to be healing wounds, not making them." That was enough for her name to get on a list and that list appeared in the paper.

She was cut dead in her PTA. "Everybody pretended I wasn't there, wouldn't speak to me," with the exception of a Black man and a woman who had been in a German concentration camp and "she didn't say anything, just took my hand."

Her children were taunted: "Your mommy's a Commie," just as children all over the country were taunted.

"Certainly I was frightened," she recalled—"You haven't done anything, you haven't hurt anybody—it was a form of terrorism."

The woman wrote verse. One poem was about school desegregation in the South. It included these lines:

Who can no longer be afraid
who has seen the little children walking
through the shadow of the raised club
and the angry fist
and the cruel mocking?
. . . who can turn away
who saw them on that day?

IN THE TELEVISION SERIES, *EYES ON THE PRIZE*, is a segment on desegregation at Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas. Viewers see a white woman push her way through the jeering, threatening mob to take the hand of 15-year old Elizabeth Eckford and guide the Black student to safety. At the time, 1957, this captured the country's headlines.

It gained the attention, too, of Senate Internal Security Subcommittee chairman, Senator James Eastland. As a result, Grace Lorch was summoned to appear before the committee.

An editorial in the *Washington Post*, October 30, 1957, asked: "Was the investigating power of the Senate given to this committee to enable it to punish a woman for befriending a Negro child?"

Grace Lorch, amidst gavel-pounding and shouting by the senators, challenged the committee's right to hold the hearings.

She knew very well what was going on there.

She told the press that, in the comfort and aid she gave Elizabeth Eckford, "many people saw a symbol of the real feelings of countless other whites in the South" and it was to intimidate such whites that "Senator Eastland is now, as always, attempting to use the United States Senate." She wrote further at that time:

The people who made that mob, many of them "ill-fed, ill housed" need to look back at the picture as well. Their children, too, have walls to break down, not as direct victims of racism, but as victims of poverty and ignorance.

Her understanding of the nature of racism was doubly dangerous to the Southern segregationists. She understood not only what it meant to Black people but how it victimized poor white children as well.

A substantial number of persons, mostly teachers and writers—classified as subversive or un-American during the McCarthy period, were forced to leave this country in order to earn a living. The Lorches were one such family. Because of their long and deep involvement in progressive politics and the fight against segregation both in the North and South, Grace Lorch and her husband, Dr. Lee Lorch, a distinguished mathematician, and their 13-year old daughter were driven from their own country and went to live and work in Canada.

Grace Lorch died in 1974. Articles about Little Rock, or programs such as *Eyes on the Prize* still do not identify her by name, a hang-over from McCarthyism still to be rectified.

SYLVIA WOODS WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPALS in *Seeing Red* and *Union Maids*, both documentary films. Before she died in 1987, she was critical of *Seeing Red*, for giving the impression that the Communist Party today "is a couple of old ladies like herself."

She joined the Party during World War II after attending a C.P. rally in Chicago where she saw some 20,000 Black and white people together applauding the struggle against racism. Coming from the deep South, her impression was:

These are the strangest people I've ever seen. Here are these white people talking about these redneck crackers in the South and how they're treating us.

This was the beginning of a life-long commitment to building working-class unity, both in trade-union work and as a neighborhood activist.

During the McCarthy period, Sylvia Woods had just come back from a trip to the Soviet Union, when two FBI agents invaded her neighborhood, going up and down the street, knocking doors, wanting to know why she had gone to Russia and what they knew about her politics.

Her neighbors called to warn her and then, it being a hot day, retired to their porches and stoops. This was going to be something to see. She described it:

I was ready for them when they came . . . I snatched his badge out of his hand . . . I threw it on the ground. He said, "Lady, you got a lot of nerve."

I said, "You can say that again . . . and I'm going to tell you something else. I want you to get off my porch and I don't want you to come back unless you got a warrant in your hand," and I'm pushing him off the porch and he almost fell down.

I said, "You're playing a very dangerous game coming to this neighborhood."

All the neighbors are laughing, watching from their porches. One said, "I'll tell you something, Mrs. Woods, they might send two others back but I'll bet you, those two won't come around here any more!"

When Sylvia Woods died, a memorial said:

We're going to miss her work in: organizing buses for demonstrations, organizing fundraisers, organizing letter-writing campaigns, sitting on the fireplug collecting signatures, organizing defense committees, teaching the young people and, all the while, being a warm, down-to-earth friend.

THESE ARE A FEW OF THE SEVERAL DOZEN marvelous women I have thus far interviewed or researched. I have tried to give a feeling of how it was; tried to illustrate, through these few women, typical examples of integrity, defiance and compassion; that FBI agents could be scorned and ridiculed and that, too, was a weapon; and most important of all, the continuity of struggle.

Often we have laughed or cried together. There is so much feeling about that time, much of it held in check for long years. There sometimes has been the yearning to forget—and this could not always be overcome. But with most of the women I came to know, the feeling burst forth.

One woman sat down at her piano and sang a song into the tape recorder; more than one recited poetry; down in New Orleans, a 90-year old woman yodeled for me.

Out of that fearful time, out of the hurt and sometimes despair, the terrible loneliness some experienced, the nervous strain and the worry for the children—women did what they had to do and they did it with courage and ingenuity.

The International Women's Movement A Force for Equality, Justice and Peace

FANNY EDELMAN

March 8 was proclaimed International Women's Day on the initiative of Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) at a conference of women Socialists held in Copenhagen in 1910. The decades that have passed since then enable us to appreciate the epochal significance of this event for millions of working women on all continents. In capitalist states they are fighting for their rights. In countries that have won liberation from colonial bondage they are fighting for a new life. And where socialism has triumphed, women are involved in all the affairs of state and society. March 8 is a festival of solidarity and friendship with the focus on democracy, national liberation, social emancipation and peace. The UN has inscribed this date in the calendar of the world community.

Today, with the threat of nuclear war overhanging our planet, with our civilization and species facing the menace of extinction, we can see the full significance of Clara Zetkin's great contribution to the world democratic women's movement, which is in the vanguard of the planet's peace forces. At the turn of the century, she wrote:

Peace can be ensured for the peoples of the world only when the slogan of "War Against War" is supported by a considerable majority of women motivated by a profound inner persuasion.

These words acquire a special meaning in the present situation when imperialism is savagely attacking the aspiration of nations for peaceful coexistence, cooperation, solidarity and friendship.

Clara Zetkin gave more than forty years of her life to the fight to emancipate women, spreading the tenet of Marx and Engels that full emancipation can only be won for women when

the working class fulfills its historic mission. The fact that the women's question became an inalienable part of the theory and practice of the proletariat's class battles is due largely to the efforts of this outstanding revolutionary. In our day, Clara Zetkin's behests are a lodestar for the huge army of her followers, who have been able, even when capitalism was still supreme in the world, to secure a substantial expansion of their civil rights and liberties.

The global magnitude of the liberation process that commenced under the impact of the Great October Revolution, reaffirms that women have an active role to play in the epoch-making battle for far-reaching social changes, democracy and peace.

In this context it is imperative to reemphasize the need for fundamentally reappraising all of capitalist society's norms and practices that, in effect, deny equality to women. In speaking of conformity between the letter of the law and reality it must be noted that here we are dealing with a complex process whose starting point is that *all* citizens, men and women, should enjoy equal rights. August Bebel wrote that the unequal status and the oppression of women "are rooted in the essence of bourgeois society," which "is unable to extirpate this evil and emancipate women."

Diverse aspects of the issue of the emancipation of women have been substantively elaborated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism, which point out that *this issue is not one of drawing distinctions between the sexes, but a social problem whose solution is a prerequisite for the renewal of society as a whole.*

Our approach to women's problems differs from the attitudes adopted by some sections of the feminist movement. We emphasize the close interconnection which links the exploitation and oppression of women with the nature of capitalist society. To blame men for the

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inequality from which women suffer means to confuse the causes of this inequality. To ignore the real problems that affect working women means to isolate the female masses from the struggle against the actual culprits responsible for this discrimination and who profit from it; it also means to underrate the degree of consciousness women have attained. Despite these differences, the common views that bring feminists closer to other democratic currents in the women's movement, explain its growing unity and make it possible to expect new advances in the consolidation and development of the joint struggle for the emancipation of women.

IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE by the women's democratic movements. The times are irretrievably gone when the predominant view was that the "woman has been given to man to continue the species and for that reason she is his chattel just as the fruit-tree is the property of the gardener." The role of women in the economic, social and cultural life of the modern world has undergone a dramatic change. The "weaker sex" is now an active force of advancement, democracy and peace, and this is inducing women to develop their identity, to win guaranteed, all-embracing rights by their day-to-day struggle for a new quality of life, a life in which they are assured of justice and happiness.

Hence, it is fair to say, that *in the world today, the conditions exist for the emancipation of women in the true sense of the word.* This is manifested in the consciousness of the people and in concrete actions, and it is further invigorating the struggle against capitalism and the fight for peace. This harmonizes with the process of transformation that characterizes our epoch of transition.

On the international scene there is a new alignment of strength in favor of socialism and peace. The movements for national liberation, independence and the self-determination of nations have grown powerfully. The potential of the peace movement is gaining strength. We are witnessing mounting actions by the working

class and other sections of the people for the satisfaction of their vital needs, for social progress, against war, imperialist exploitation, nuclear blackmail, aggression and oppression. All this is bringing women into the struggle, both for their own rights and for the destiny of humankind.

"The experience of all liberation movements has shown," Lenin said, "that the success of our revolution depends on how much the women take part in it."¹ These words have been and continue to be borne out by practice.

Everybody knows of the role played by women in the Cuban revolution. With arms in hand they fought for the freedom and independence of their country. They were active in the drive to wipe out illiteracy, and today they continue to be active in promoting economic development. Fidel Castro had every reason to declare at the the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba that:

The participation of Cuban women in all the tasks set by the revolution and the party throughout all these years merits admiration and universal acknowledgment.²

Many Nicaraguan women were directly involved in the guerrilla war against the Somoza dictatorship and in forming the Sandinist National Liberation Front. In that Central American republic, women are participating in the process of revolutionary transformation and they are helping to defend their country against the designs of U.S. imperialism and its myrmidons. By their visible, massive contribution to the revolution, said Tomas Borge, one of the leaders of the SNF, women have won the right to be in the front ranks of the builders of a free Nicaragua.

The leader of the Angolan revolution, Agostinho Neto, who proclaimed the independence of his country, declared that the People's Republic of Angola would do everything to facilitate the emancipation of women and protect their rights, which they won by their participation in the war of liberation and in the people's resistance to the mercenary gangs and aggressive acts of the South African racists.

Once downtrodden, women in Afghani-

stan have become a dependable pillar of the new life. Nobody will put the tag "slaves of slaves" on those who are fighting the dushmans side by side with men, studying at institutions of higher learning, and working at factories and building sites.

Thousands of women in the African National Congress have been fighting for freedom in South Africa for years on end. They are inspired by the example of Winnie Mandela, now a symbol of the patriots who have risen against the apartheid regime.

THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ALSO in the women's movement of the whole of Latin America. In the past, reaction used large numbers of women for its purposes. Today, the women's movement has a perceptibly larger social base, and the movement itself has grown more mature in political terms. This is exemplified by my own country, Argentina, where women constitute nearly thirty percent of the economically active population.

Set up in 1947, the Union of Argentinian Women (UAW) has done much to draw working women, not only into the discussion of the nation's major social problems but also into the efforts to resolve these problems. Despite the repressions and interdictions during the sinister years of the dictatorship (1979-1983), the Union's grassroots organizations went on functioning; the journal *Aqui Nosotros* continued publication; and much was done to protect human rights and find out what happened to patriots sent to prison or listed as "missing." The Political Women's organization was formed to bring more women into actions against the tyranny. Together with the UAW, it enlisted thousands of Argentinian women into the movement to safeguard national sovereignty and peace in the region and throughout the world during the conflict between Britain and Argentina.

The Union of Argentine Women constantly stirs public opinion with its initiatives aimed at safeguarding the rights of mothers and children

and winning equality for women in the family and the state. For its part, reaction preaches "moderation" in order to divert Argentinian women from public activity.

The Central Committee report to the CPA's Congress (November 1986) states:

The struggle for the emancipation of women is part of the struggle of the working class, of the whole people. In order to achieve its objectives the women's movement should unite its destiny with that of the proletariat. There can be no emancipation for women without a revolution guaranteeing peace, happiness, progress, food, jobs and equality.

At this congress it was noted:

Passiveness or indifference in regard to the problem of organizing the women's movement, underrating this sector of our work, or any attempt to rate this movement as the business of women themselves are incompatible with membership in the party.⁴

Having set the highly important target of forming a Front for National and Social Liberation, the congress noted that Argentinian women should play a major role in it and that women Communists should do everything in their power to marshal the enormous energy potential of the mass of women workers.

A change in the character of the women's movement is to be observed not only in Argentina. This has been shown by many national congresses and meetings in Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, and other Latin American states. Our movement's problems were discussed in detail at a meeting in Havana in June 1985. This meeting was attended by delegates from 39 states of Latin America and the Caribbean basin. Latin American representatives contributed actively to the World Women's Conference in Nairobi (July 1985) and the Decade of Women (1975-1985), raising issues such as the economic crisis, the foreign debt and the struggle to end the arms race and ensure peace among nations.

This mass participation of women in the class struggle, the anti-imperialist movement and the battle for peace is thus becoming a highlight of our epoch of social renewal. *The wom-*

en's movement is now a major socio-political force. It has never been so extensive as today, and has never before displayed such a powerful aspiration for unity.

FORMED IN 1945, IMMEDIATELY AFTER the Second World War, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) has united millions of women throughout the world. As one of the initiators of the International Year of Women (1975) and the Decade of Women with the motto, "Equality, Progress and Peace," both of which were proclaimed by the United Nations Organization, our federation gave a further demonstration of its unitary spirit, wide representation, influence and dynamism.

By virtue of numerous objective reasons, the aims advanced by the WIDF have still not been attained and remain on the agenda to this day. But we have reinforced the unity of the women's movement globally and drawn new sections of women into it. They are *beginning to realize that the success of the struggle for social*

and economic equality cannot solely by legislation, that it depends to a large degree on the extent to which this struggle fuses with the actions for a radical restructuring of society on the basis of social justice.

The federation's basic aims until the end of the present century are to help eliminate the nuclear war threat; prevent the militarization of outer space; ensure a turn toward détente and peaceful cooperation among the nations; do away with racism and the atrocious apartheid regime; establish a new international economic order; and, guarantee human rights. These aims are indicative of the maturity and all-embracing character of our program. □

Notes

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Progress Publishers, 1965, p. 181.
- 2 *Informe Central. III congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba*, Havana, 1986, p. 80.
- 3 *Frente y accion de masas por la partia liberada y el socialismo*, Informe del Comité Central del Partido Comunista al XVI Congreso, Buenos Aires, November 4, 1984, p.7-E and 8-E.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 14-G.

Wilson's Apologies for Racism

TONY MONTEIRO

In the 1980s, new theories, concepts and programmatic proposals to address the historic problems of Afro-American inequality have appeared. Among the more prominent of the new theorists is sociologist William Julius Wilson. Wilson's most significant and well known works are *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*, (1978)¹ and *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (1987).²

Wilson claims to present a new liberal explanation of the causes and solutions to racial inequality. The core of his theory is that class replaces race as the principle factor determining the lives of Afro-Americans. This theory first received prominence in the early 1970s when it was put forth by Richard Scammons and Ben Wattenberg.³ They argued that, as a consequence of the civil rights movement, a "Black middle class" had emerged. Although they had seriously exaggerated the size of the Black "middle class" (by including all non-blue collar sectors of the working class, as well as traditional middle-strata elements) their theory was used to argue that racism was no longer an obstacle to Afro-American achievement.

Daniel Moynihan and Nathan Glazer had, from the early 1960s, contended that Afro-Americans were but one of many ethnic groups that inhabit large cities. In fact, they argued, Afro-Americans were the last immigrants to the cities. Thus, the Afro-American experience was not fundamentally different from that of other immigrants. To explain Afro-Americans' inequality, Moynihan and Glazer argued that Afro-American culture is deficient.⁴ This crystallized into a theory that Afro-Americans were responsible for perpetuating their own inequality.⁵

Moynihan argued that, at the heart of Black cultural inadequacies, relative to other ethnic groups, was the Black family. The system, he insisted, was not to be blamed; the fault rested

with Afro-Americans. Moynihan and Glazer have become intense opponents of affirmative action. Their position, as well as that of Scammons and Wattenberg, has become the theoretical foundation of neo-liberalism.

Wilson further develops this line. Class exploitation and racism, according to his logic, are separable and opposing factors. He holds that the social status of Afro-Americans will be determined either by race or class, not by both.⁶ "Historic racism," Wilson argues, has a residual impact and "contemporary racism" is of minor significance. This, he contends, is a new reality resulting from the combined impact of structural changes in the economy, the successes of the civil rights movement and the passage of the civil rights legislation of 1964, 1965 and the housing act of 1968. He makes the additional argument that the government has been deracialized—that is to say, it has become colorblind.⁷

Moreover, these changes have altered the internal class relationships in the Afro-American community and the relationships of Afro-Americans as a people to the economy. Each class and stratum within the Black community, he suggests, has a distinct relationship to the economy. On the one hand, the internal structure of the Afro-American community increasingly and progressively is tending to resemble the structure of the white community. On the other hand, the structural shifts in industry and the failure of affirmative action to address the economic problems of what he calls the "truly disadvantaged," has produced what Wilson labels a "ghetto underclass."⁸

The "ghetto underclass" consists primarily of the young, uneducated and permanently poor. This group is at the bottom of the entire economic structure of society. The "underclass," moreover, is characterized as being almost totally Afro-American.

While Wilson's first book advanced the thesis that racism was being eliminated from the U.S. economy, government and the state, his second is concerned with addressing the prob-

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lem of what he terms "the truly disadvantaged." Here, Wilson proposes a "class analysis" of the problems of poverty. The "ghetto underclass" is for him a new lumpen-proletariat.⁹ They account for almost half of the young generation of Afro-Americans. They are separated from the traditionally poor and the working class. In Wilson's logic, the "truly disadvantaged" are isolated from the rest of society. He suggests, their status is as much a consequence of their social isolation as it is their lack of jobs. Furthermore, the "disadvantaged" and the "truly disadvantaged" are separate social groups.

Any serious critique, therefore, of Wilson's work must address his logic, the essence of his concepts of race and class and how he understands the relationship of these concepts to racial inequality. Furthermore, Wilson's understanding of the capitalist economy, its structural and cyclical crises and the role of the state in regulating economic, social and political processes must be carefully and forthrightly addressed.

IN THE SERVICE OF BIG BUSINESS

Wilson's scholarship and argumentation operate simultaneously on the levels of theory, ideology and politics. In recognizing this, it must be equally recognized that Wilson's reasoning and policy recommendations are bound to the class interest of monopoly capital. It would be a fatal error to assume that Wilson's ideas transcend class realities and the class struggle. On the contrary, they are inseparably bound to each.

He is forthright in stating his political and ideological objectives. He says that he wishes to provide fresh thinking for the liberal perspective on the questions of Afro-American equality, class subordination and rising poverty. He identifies himself with the positions of Daniel Moynihan and Bayard Rustin.¹⁰

Wilson's "refocused liberal perspective" is shaped by Right-wing social democracy and neo-liberalism. He crafts his arguments of cloth drawn from varied theoretical and ideological sources. His use of what some consider class analysis, his identification of the problem of

class as the heart of racial inequality and his use of economic analysis have attracted some radical scholars and activists to aspects of his thinking.

At the same time he assuages the neo-liberals and new conservatives with the idea that racism ceases to have significance in the lives of Black people and with his criticism of affirmative action. Moreover, some erstwhile liberals find that his labelling of the Black poor as a "ghetto underclass" allows them to follow his lead without fear of being charged with racist scholarship.

Although crafted to have broad appeal, Wilson's line is part and parcel of monopoly capital's theoretical and ideological retooling. He offers new arguments in defense of monopoly capital and its capacity to resolve not only the problem of racial oppression, but that of what he calls "class inequality". He provides reasoning and terminology which is even now being used to justify new assaults upon the political, economic and social gains of the Afro-American community. Almost every opponent of Afro-American equality can find support in Wilson's positions.

WHAT TYPE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRAT

Wilson identifies himself as a social democrat.¹¹ The question is, however, a social democrat of what type? His embrace of Bayard Rustin must be understood as an embrace of Rustin's Right-social-democratic positions. Rustin was an advocate of the theory of "color-blindness"—that is the theory which denies that racism has significance in the lives of Afro-Americans. The other side of this theory is that of "class-blindness"—the denial that class exploitation has significance in the lives of workers. Moreover, Rustin shared the same political stable with "liberal" and conservative supporters of the military-industrial complex. He, as well, bitterly fought Martin Luther King's opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Nor is it possible to ignore Wilson's frank association with Moynihan and Moynihanism. Moynihan also claimed that "contemporary racism" has little impact upon the lives of Afro-Americans. "Historic racism", he insisted had

psychologically impaired the Black community and transformed it into a "tangle of pathologies." Moynihan went on to argue that these "pathologies" are the cause of the perpetuation of inequality. For Moynihan, the Black family constituted the principle manifestation of these pathologies. Moreover, Moynihanism, in essence, is an unbridled attack upon Afro-American women. Wilson adopts this anti-female perspective, that Black female-headed families are not only impoverished, but are "pathological." Like Rustin, Moynihan has throughout his political career been a leading voice in support of large military spending and aggression against "Third World" nations.

A WRONG VIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Wilson is correct in recognizing that the economy is the crucial variable in understanding class and race. In fact it is primary. His understanding of the economy is, on the other hand, mechanical. Wilson's work lacks a sufficient analysis of the stages of U.S. economic development and the structural and cyclical problems inherent to each stage.

He identifies three stages of U.S. economic history. Each stage contains its own unique set of racial practices. The first is the period of slavery and its immediate aftermath, which he designates "the period of plantation economy and racial caste oppression." Stage two begins in the last quarter of the 19th century and ends in the New Deal and is designated as the period of "industrial expansion." The last stage, which crystallizes in the 1960s and 70s, is the period of "progressive transition from racial inequalities to class inequalities."¹² He says,

the periods of American race relations seem to relate racial change to fundamental economic changes rather directly, *it bears repeating that the different stages of race relations are structured by the unique arrangements and interactions of the economy and the polity.* [My emphasis—T.M.]¹³

Wilson identifies only the second period of U.S. economic history with "class conflict." The first period is characterized by "racial caste oppression" and the third by "progressive transition from racial to class inequalities."

Class conflict, according to Wilson, is not based in production relations but in what he terms "white economic class interest."¹⁴ From the outset, skin color, in Wilson's reasoning, determines the class struggle. "Racial inequality," he says, "reflected the class interests of white workers and was designed to eliminate Black encroachment in a context of competitive race relations."¹⁵ Jim Crow segregation was generated by "white working-class efforts to eliminate Black competition."¹⁶

On the other hand, Blacks have also had a single class interest. A fact which has existed, he argues, until the present period when there has emerged class division within the Black community. Already Wilson's unclarity about class exploitation, racial oppression and class conflict is extraordinary. Racial oppression of Afro-Americans as a whole is, moreover, indistinguishable from class exploitation and oppression of Afro-American workers. This confusion permits Wilson to claim that the system of Jim Crow grew out of the class struggle and the class interest of white workers. This is another form of blaming the victim. Wilson puts the blame here on the victims of class exploitation, in this case white workers, for the racist oppression of Afro-Americans and the system of double exploitation of Afro-American workers.

Monopoly capital is virtually unmentioned. Moreover, Wilson is historically blind. In the 1930s, the working class and Afro-American upsurge that built the Congress of Industrial Organizations mounted the most serious challenge to Jim Crow segregation in basic industry to that time. Wilson's confusion about class struggle makes him unable to understand working-class unity and how and why it must be fought for. Although he speaks about the democratic gains of the Civil Rights Movement, he does not understand that these were the results of struggle. From "Montgomery to Memphis," the anchor and the militant base of the Civil Rights Movement were Afro-American workers, who waged a two-sided struggle for Afro-American unity and for unity of the trade-union movement with the Afro-American people.

Wilson, in essence, is arguing the idea of two societies—one white, the other Black. Each

society has its own racial and class interests, which in the case of the white workers unites them with white capitalists against Black people. Here, Wilson picks up a piece of the "colonial theory"—the theory that Afro-Americans are a colony within the borders of the United States. "Class conflict" for Wilson, is the effort of white workers to exclude Afro-Americans as competitors in the job market. Racial inequality, therefore, is the result of this "conflict" between Black and white workers. Racism, finally, reflects the class interest of whites in general and white workers in particular.

Wilson's formulation obscures the real "class conflict" that has been the driving force in each stage of U.S. economic history—the conflict between labor and capital. While arguing that racism has declined in the current period, Wilson sees it as all pervasive in earlier periods. Both are exaggerations. The idea of the all-pervasiveness of racism suggests that there were periods in U.S. history when there was not a struggle against racism. This is untrue.

The notion of the declining significance of race, on the other side, suggests that the struggle against racism has no significance in the current period. Thus, Wilson is finally suggesting that either there was never a struggle against racism (perhaps except for the brief period of the Civil Rights Movement) or that there is no need for one. He is, however, unwavering in his claim that white workers are unalterably racist and that "enlightened" policies of the white liberal representatives of big business are responsible for change.

Wilson's inability to recognize that the class struggle is common to each stage of U.S. history, makes him unable to understand the relationship of the special exploitation of Black workers in a general system of exploitation of all workers. Neither does Wilson see a single economy dominated by a single class which is responsible for the exploitation of all workers irrespective of race.

Racism, according to Wilson, is devoid of class foundations, either as an ideology or as a necessary component of the relations of production. For him, it is a system of ideas, prejudices, attitudes, behaviors and government policies

that transcend the class interests of big business. This understanding is far too narrow to explain "historic" and "contemporary" racism. Racial inequality and the ideology of racism which justifies it, is an inseparable part of the production relationships of the U.S. It is not merely subjective, it is, as well, an objective reality. Nothing better reflects this than the fact that the double exploitation of Black workers remains an unchanged characteristic of U.S. history.

A MISUNDERSTANDING OF CLASS

Just as Wilson's conceptualization of racial inequality is narrow, so is his understanding of class. Class, for him is an "exchange relationship."¹⁷ This, finally, means that it is not directly connected to production. Classes, therefore, are people who share a common set of life chances, and not a common relationship to the means of production. Moreover, exploitation, the fact that workers are not paid the total value of what they produce does not exist for Wilson. Wilson insists that the life chances of white workers are not directly affected by racism, therefore they are a separate class from Black workers. Thus, he suggests, Black and white workers have opposing class interests.

The system of racial and female oppression is, in reality, *directly* connected to the system of class exploitation. The double wage standard depresses the wages of women and oppressed minorities as well as that of all workers. However, when Wilson speaks of the "declining significance of race," nowhere does he have in mind its impact upon the system of exploitation of workers in general and Afro-American workers in particular. But, because Wilson's theory does not acknowledge exploitation as a fundamental feature (in reality the most fundamental feature) of the capitalist system, he is unable to begin to understand the impact of racism upon the "life chances" of workers of every race and ethnic group. While declaring that class is "a slippery concept," it would appear not so "slippery" as to prevent his developing a class concept useful to splitting the working class.

Wilson, in response to a question in the *New York Times*, held that gains in the struggle

against poverty depended on "the private economy."¹⁸ While acknowledging that poverty and unemployment had been increasing since 1970, he fails to see the relationship between this and the "private economy." In fact, he sees structural changes in the economy, "the movement from the goods-producing manufacturing sector, to the service-producing industries," as the main cause. Wilson is partially correct.

The economy, however, has not merely undergone structural changes since the 1970s, it has been experiencing a structural crisis. A good part of this crisis can be explained by technological changes in steel, automobile and rubber production. Likewise of importance are the increases in the magnitude of those sectors that service the industrial and financial operations of the economy and are responsible for commercial activity. Wilson incorrectly assumes that this means that the economy has ceased to be a production system and has become a service economy. However, the changes that produce the structural crisis go far beyond this.

What is missing from Wilson's explanation is a recognition that scientific and technological changes are used by big business, especially the multi-national corporations, to maximize profit. Thus, in the hands of the monopoly corporations, it becomes a weapon against the working people. Rather than "a general good," it simultaneously increases the rate of exploitation of workers and unemployment, poverty and hunger. Moreover, it has a special racist dimension, reflected in the awesome hardship inflicted upon Afro-Americans and the ruthless policies that deny Afro-Americans even minimum relief.

Besides the contraction of basic industry, other elements of the structural crisis are:

- Growth in the size and qualitative significance of banking and finance capital. It now has unchallenged dominance of the economy.

- Dramatic expansion of the military-industrial-financial complex and of government military spending.

- A monumental federal debt of \$2.5 trillion and a \$400 billion trade deficit.

- The federal government's active support of the drive for maximum profits.

- The introduction of computers and robots to replace labor and increase productivity.

- Changes in the occupational structure of the working class and the increase in its technical, managerial and supervisory components.

These processes of structural change and structural crisis occur side by side with the normal cycle of growth and recession. Since 1971, U.S. economic growth has been at its slowest pace since WWII. Recessions have been increasingly more destructive. As a consequence, since 1971, real wages of workers have been declining while unemployment, underemployment, poverty and homelessness have increased. The social and economic infrastructure of roads, bridges, sewer and water systems has fallen into disrepair. Finally, in spite of periods of economic growth, economic gains have not been translated to social benefit. Instead there has been an unprecedented polarization of wealth and poverty. Almost 40 million live in poverty with the majority being women and children.

This is the situation produced by the contradictions in the "private economy" and will only be addressed by radical changes in the "private economy." Wilson's explanation, however, fails to account for the depths of the structural and cyclical crises of capitalism.

THE MAIN VICTIMS

A key dimension of Wilson's argument concerning the declining significance of race is the separation of what he calls "historic racism" from "contemporary racism." Earlier sociological research had demonstrated that, while white males had shown upward income and occupational mobility in the 1950s and 1960s, Black males had shown either no mobility or downward mobility. It was concluded that over one-third of Black males would have lower-paying jobs and less significant occupations than their fathers.¹⁹ These early studies excluded women generally and Black women in particular. However, in this same period, white women experienced meager mobility and Black women the greatest downward mobility. Wilson claims that, since the 1960s, major changes have occurred in this situation. Race no longer determines income and occupational mobility. Oliver

and Glick, using similar data to that used by Wilson, argue that his contention is grossly exaggerated. They conclude,

Projecting 1973 black mobility rates across time, we note the disconcerting finding that blacks, even with their improved rates of mobility, and even after 10 generations, will not attain the occupational distribution of whites in 1962.²⁰

This study did not account for the more rapid rate at which Blacks are pushed out of the labor force; nor the destructive impact of the Reagan economic and social policies which promote high rates of unemployment and drastic cuts in social programs. All of these processes are exacerbated by the manner in which the scientific and technical revolutions are utilized by large corporations and the pro-big-business-technology policies of the government. In fact, the Reagan Administration's science policies see technology as a component of slow economic growth and high-unemployment policies. It is estimated that, by 1990, robots will replace 1 million industrial workers and from 60-70,000 in General Motors plants alone. Those who lose jobs, along with the new millions of youth who will never have jobs, will become a surplus and "unemployable" population. There is funding neither to retrain laid-off workers nor to educate the young generation.

It is precisely at the moment when science demands the quality of education across the board be increased, that there has been an across-the-board assault upon education generally and students and teachers specifically. The racist dimension of this assault is unprecedented in our nation's history. Not only are a lower percentage of Blacks and Hispanics graduating from colleges and universities, they are practically nonexistent in engineering, computer sciences and other hi-tech professions.

A study of the quality of education for Blacks and Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia's public schools found that, for the majority, the quality of education had dramatically declined.²¹ Of almost 250 public schools in Philadelphia, only 43 achieve even minimum levels of desegregation. Most poor Afro-American and Puerto Rican children are "tracked" into classes that "pre-

pare" them to be pushed out of school at the earliest possible time. What is happening in Philadelphia is but a microcosm of what is happening in every major city in the nation.

Segregation in housing continues unabated. Massey and Denton, in a major study of residential segregation conclude:

The high degree of Black residential segregation and its relative imperviousness to socio-economic influences suggests that *race continues to be a fundamental cleavage in society*.⁹ [My emphasis—T.M.]

Like segregated schools, segregated neighborhoods receive fewer social services. Wilson argues that "middle class" Blacks have left the ghettos, leaving them to the "underclass." However, the truth is that Blacks, irrespective of income, are residentially segregated and thus deprived of equal social services.

Other researchers have found that Afro-Americans of every income and class believe that race remains a factor in deciding their life chances.²³ The *New York Times* reported²⁴ that Afro-Americans believe the "series of violent incidents against blacks is a result of a national conspiracy to terrorize and kill them." Most polls suggest that Afro-Americans consider racism to have reached unprecedented levels. Most attribute this to the Reagan Administration's policies.

POVERTY: A CREATION OF CAPITALISM

Wilson acknowledges the dramatic increase in poverty in recent years. However, he sees poverty as a mere temporary feature of capitalism. He holds to notions that suggest that the poor are in some ways responsible for their situation. This is manifested in his idea that the "truly disadvantaged" are not part of the working class and is especially obvious in his discussion of the "ghetto underclass."

. . . the term underclass suggests that changes have taken place in ghetto neighborhoods and the groups that have been left behind are collectively different from those that lived in these neighborhoods in earlier years.²⁵

To make the point that the "ghetto underclass" is socially isolated and psychologically

pathological, he lumps welfare recipients and others in deep poverty with street criminals. This device is not new. It has, for some time, been used by reactionary forces to attack the poor as the cause of poverty. Wilson goes further. He designates the poor as lumpen proletarians.

Karl Marx used this term to refer to declassed elements of society, those who were not only removed from production by hopeless unemployment, but who are not willing to work. Marx referred to them as *declassed*.

The longterm unemployed, the homeless, the hungry, as well as those on public assistance are not declassed or part of the lumpen proletariat. They want jobs, housing and education for their children. They have, time and again, proven their readiness to fight for them. The National Union of the Homeless is a most extraordinary example of this. It is affiliated to Local 1199c of the Hospital Workers Union. Its leadership contends that their struggle is part of the class struggle and they are workers fighting for permanent jobs and homes.

A recent study at the University of Michigan shows that the majority of people on welfare do all they can to get permanent employment. The fight to fuse a sense of humanity into the welfare system has always been spearheaded by leaders who linked the fight for welfare to the struggles of the working class.

The terms "ghetto underclass," lumpen-proletarians and "truly disadvantaged" convey meanings that go far beyond merely designating poverty and joblessness. Wilson applies them only to Afro-Americans. Secondly, they are used to designate not only poverty and joblessness, but what are considered deep-seated "social pathologies." Almost half of Afro-American youth are designated part of the "ghetto underclass" or lumpen proletariat.

Henry Winston, late National Chairman of the Communist Party, USA, made a singular contribution to understanding unemployment, poverty and the lumpen. He said:

Today, in the citadel of imperialism there is a massive increase in the army of the unemployed. Alongside of this, the number of lumpen elements also increases.

However, these groups *do not merge, each has its distinctive characteristics.*

As Marx wrote in *The Class Struggle in France*, the lumpen proletariat "forms a mass sharply differentiated from the industrial proletariat."

Winston continued,

Specifically, the *lumpen elements are those so demoralized by the system that they are not only jobless but that, to them, a job is unthinkable.* It is their declassed, parasitical status and outlook that sharply distinguishes them from the great mass of the unemployed, who are searching for and demanding jobs and the opportunity for a decent life. That is why, in addition to making the distinction that Marx emphasized, it is *even more necessary now, than in his time, to clearly distinguish between the lumpenproletariat and the great mass of the unemployed*, which includes so many youth (particularly Black and Brown) who have never regularly been employed.²⁶ [My emphasis—T.M.]

To this it can be added that the systematic penetration of working-class neighborhoods and schools with drugs and alcohol, as well as the ruthless assaults upon working-class and poor people's organizations, indicates that the monopolists seek to reduce large sections of the unemployed to lumpens. Moreover, much of the "culture" that is packaged for Afro-Americans and working-class youth is designed to make them passive and destroy any inkling of working-class consciousness and pride.

Wilson's designation of the Afro-American poor as a "ghetto underclass" and lumpenproletarians, whose behavior and consciousness are pathological, is a vicious insult to Afro-American workers and a capitulation to the most racist forces in our nation.

WILSON, MOYNIHAN, RUSTIN vs KING

Wilson, Moynihan and Bayard Rustin have in common more than theoretical perspectives. They share common politics. Moynihan and Rustin, after the passage of the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, did all they could to undermine an offensive strategy that would have addressed the problems of war, poverty and racism. In this respect, they were both opponents of the offensive direction undertaken by

Martin Luther King after 1965. In fact, not only were they opposed to King's strategy, they were opposed to struggle altogether.

Wilson shares with them this anti-struggle approach. The whole of his theory leads to this conclusion. His adoption of the positions of Rustin and Moynihan confirms his adoption of an approach that will never solve the problems of unemployment and poverty.

Winston summarized King's strategy, a strategy whose substance remains viable today:

It had become apparent to King that *an offensive strategy of new dimensions had to be built*. The new situation required the continued and even expanded participation of church and middle-strata forces, including students and professionals, Black and white, that had predominated in 1954-66. But King saw that the basis for regaining the offensive was *working-class* strength moving in coalition with the middle-class forces. He now directed all his efforts towards involving the working class in a higher level of struggle with the Black liberation movement—and with the poor and oppressed.²⁷

Wilson's failure to recognize the centrality of an "offensive strategy of new dimensions" in the era of rising poverty and misery for millions of people, indicates that he believes that monopoly capital will resolve the problems it creates. Wilson suggests that the "refocused liberal perspective" will provide the necessary policy agenda to address the mounting devastation. His embrace of Rustin and Moynihan, rather than King, suggests an elitist contempt for the masses of people and what can be achieved through struggle. □

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Peace and the Centrality of The Class Struggle

JIM WEST

Seventy years have passed since the party of Lenin said "Yes!" to the questions which involved the very existence of the beleaguered, young, first socialist republic: can socialism be built in one country? can capitalism and socialism peacefully coexist?

Thanks to the tremendous sacrifices and dedication of the Soviet people, made in conditions of forced march, the Soviet Union became strong enough to be the decisive factor in saving the world from the Nazi scourge.

Today, primarily because of the threat of omnicide in a nuclear war, the question, "to be or not to be," again is posed. This time it confronts not one but all countries of the world. New unprecedented problems demand solution.

Indeed, the times call for new thinking, not least of all by Communists. That is why the Communist Party, USA is for greater cohesion of all Communist and workers' parties.

The Washington summit meeting of last December was a great historic event. For the first time ever, a whole category of mass destruction weapons—intermediate and short range nuclear missiles will be eliminated under the treaty signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. People the world over rejoice in this first big step. Together with the ABM treaty of 1972, it is a downpayment on freedom from the threat and fear of nuclear omnicide.

The need for continued mass peace activity persists. There is still a battle to be waged for ratification of the INF treaty by Congress. It is a time, in the Leninist spirit of confident reliance on the people, to press for intensive peace activity and ever wider mass mobilization for the next steps on the road to a nuclear weapons-free world by the year 2000.

In 1917, *peace* was a slogan of struggle.

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So it is today. Peace must be waged to be won. Communists have the class approach. By this we mean, first, that the working class has the leading role in uniting the broadest forces to wage peace. It can play this role because it bears the main burden of the arms race. It is the workers of hand and brain, the class of true creators, who value peace as the necessary condition of their existence.

In his report to the 24th National Convention of the CPUSA, July 1986, Gus Hall showed that the negative impact of military spending has become a dominant economic factor. It has exacerbated the structural crisis of capitalism. It was a major factor contributing to the stock market crash of 1987.

The United States is now a debtor nation, owing more than the next three biggest debtor nations combined. The number of jobless who no longer get unemployment benefits is now five and a half million. Among them hunger, ill health and homelessness spread rapidly. More than 13 million poor children are without adequate food, shelter and health care. These are the children of the multi-racial, multi-national working class and poor farmers. One cannot simply come to these poverty-stricken millions and say, "Your needs must be subordinated to the need to end the threat of nuclear war."

The inhuman equation of whale-size military spending and minnow-size funds for social needs reflects the basic contradiction of capitalism. It provides a powerful self-interest stimulus to fight for drastic cuts in military spending by ending the nuclear arms race and using the savings to rebuild the country's worn-out infrastructure, to put millions back to work by conversion from military to civilian production.

Not only the working class has an economic stake in waging peace, the large middle strata which depends on the working class for its livelihood also stands to gain. The successful struggle against the nuclear war danger requires combining the problem of day-to-day living

with the problem of safeguarding life itself from nuclear suicide.

The appeal to the common sense of politicians and statesmen, alone, is not enough to guarantee success. Setting masses in motion is the most persuasive way to move the status-quo powers-that-be to act in the interest of peace.

The working-class approach is vital also because the ideological struggle is an essential part of waging peace. All other strata, including sober-minded capitalists, cannot be irrevocably won to consistent anti-war positions without overcoming their hesitations, doubts, cynicism and fear. These, in part, are produced by the pressures and ideological influences of the extreme Right and the pseudo-Left.

Further, just as it takes a struggle to overcome the inertia of old ways and thinking, so does it take a struggle to eliminate detours which turn new thinking in anarchistic, adventurist, capitulationist and irresponsible directions.

Consider, for example, the meaning of the case of Lt. Colonel Oliver North. His name is synonymous with secret military activity in violation of national and international law, "justified" by a "higher law" of opposition to communism, masked by false patriotism and protected by the White House itself. This international brigand, this trader in human lives for arms, drugs and cash, this misanthrope, was hailed as a hero by the President and most of the mass media.

Is North a one-time phenomenon, or is he an expression of a trend? This is no idle question. It was North's kind of mentality that produced a Captain Calley who ordered the destruction of Mai Lai and the massacre of all its inhabitants "in order to save the village from Communists." This kind of mentality could push the button for a nuclear attack in the name of patriotism—of "better dead than red."

This is the ideology, or rather theology, of a nuclear armageddon, the instrument for which is Star Wars. It is a doomsday philosophy which well suits the military-monopoly complex that banks on Star Wars to resurrect the discredited "manifest destiny" of the United States to rule the world.

For both the religious-Right and the military-monopoly complex, everything must be subordinated to fighting the "Soviet threat." This is the "higher law" which justifies lying to Congress and the people, violating all legal and moral norms of behavior. The enormous profits that come with observing that higher law cement the alliance between the religious-Right and the military-monopoly complex.

Star Wars has become the center piece on the altar of the nuclear armageddon theology. It is espoused by the religious-right fundamentalists who are closely tied to the military-monopoly complex and who have avidly supported every escalation in Reagan's unprecedented arms buildup. While many of them are violently opposed to the INF treaty, some accept the elimination of the intermediate and shorter range missiles as an advantage for the United States. They believe the treaty will increase the vulnerability of the USSR to the first-strike missiles by reducing the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union more than that of the U.S. (Under the terms of the treaty, the USSR will eliminate 1,600 warheads, the U.S.—400.)

The ideology of a nuclear armageddon is elaborated in a book by Hal Lindsey and C.C. Carlson, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. It has sold 20 million copies in 17 different languages since 1967. In this book, the authors predict the destruction of the Soviet Union and communism in a limited nuclear war and the death of one-third of the human race. This, they say, is biblical prophecy.¹

Since the book first appeared, the high priests of the ultra-Right have expanded its theme into a theology of the survivability of nuclear armageddon (the biblical prophecy of the second coming of Christ). Only those who believe in God, in accordance with the ultra-right fundamentalist (anti-Communist) gospel, will survive.

This "better dead than red" message of doom is beamed into millions of homes by a number of religious-Right TV ministries. One such TV minister, Pat Robertson, who has called Ronald Reagan a "Neville Chamberlain" for signing the INF treaty, is seeking the Republican nomination for President. Another, Jerry

Falwell, had the temerity to call this humanity-hating ideology the "Moral Majority." The influence of this ideology reaches into the highest political circles. Ronald Reagan, addressing a religious-Right TV club, in 1980, said, "We may be the generation that sees Armageddon."²

Vice-President George Bush, a frontrunner for the Republican nomination for president, has said:

You have the survivability of command and control, survivability of industrial potential and protection of a percentage of your citizens, and you have a capability that inflicts more damage on the opposition than it can inflict on you. That is the way you have a winner.³

This is the thinking behind Star Wars. Its influence was measured by a Yankelevich poll⁴ which showed 40 percent of those queried believed: "When the Bible predicts that the earth will be destroyed by fire, it is telling about nuclear war." And, 26 percent approved the statement: "In a nuclear war with the Communists, our faith in God will assure our survival."

Clearly, to wage peace successfully requires combatting the influence of this misanthropic ideology. It fevers the minds of zealots and creates an aura of martyrdom, mindless heroism and false patriotism around those, who like Lt. Col. North and his paper-shredding secretary, can be induced to ignore all moral conduct, break all laws and do the forbidden and unthinkable in the name of a "higher law." In other words, anything goes so long as you can pin an anti-Soviet label on it.

Marching in lockstep with the religious-Right toward Armageddon, is Zionist militarism which has moved to the front ranks of the die-hard anti-Sovieteers. Rabid with chauvinism and nationalism, militant Zionism has a short fuse which quickly leads to explosive violence, intolerance and hair-trigger use of armed force. It generates the inhuman fanaticism which could unleash a nuclear war.

At a time when unity is the urgent imperative for imposing peace, the divisive evil of racism reveals its character as an enemy of peace, an ally of the ultra-Right military-monopoly, Zionist cabal. The recent surge in the U.S. of hoodlum, racist attacks must be seen in the con-

text of the militarist ultra-Right attempt to reverse both the general decline in racism among the people and the growing unity and power of the peace majority.

Among liberals, there are some who have negative feelings about the improvement in USA-USSR relations. These are the cold-war diehards, including some prominent leaders of the peace movement, who always have to balance any criticism of U.S. foreign (and domestic) policy with craven anti-Sovietism. One does not think of the word "courage" in connection with the role of such liberals.

The healthy trend among liberals is expressed by the *Nation* which, advocating openness in response to perestroika and glasnost, points out that, in so doing, one is liable to be charged with being a dupe of the Soviet Union. In that case, it says:

So be it. . . . If the alternative is to join the mounting chorus of Kirkpatricks and Brzeznskis, Kissingers and Eagleburgers, who refuse to shed the ancient, turgid orthodoxies of the cold war.⁵

A few words must be said about the pseudo-Lefts and their attitude toward the Soviet Union in this context. Not because they have any mass following, which they do not, but because these sects are a devious, disruptive and a confusing force in various peace movements; because it takes but a few to destroy the work of millions.

The Trotskyites, by nature incapable of any new thinking, still peddle the permanent revolution dogma of a here-and-now military showdown with capitalism. In utter disregard of the over-riding nuclear war danger, the U.S. Trotskyites blaze in their paper the headline: "Gorbachev's Pipe Dream: Peace with Imperialism."

Another such group is the self-styled "Marxist-Leninist" sect called the "Line of March" (LOM). Pretending to be a supporter of the Soviet Union, this group proclaims:

The Soviet Union has an objective class interest in the undermining of the world imperialist system. The political, economic and military strength of the Soviet Union is therefore a crucial part of the arsenal arrayed against imperialism.⁶

What the Trotskyites attack the Soviet Union for not being and not doing, "Line of March" attributes to the Soviet Union as a given fact. This is Trotskyism turned inside out.

The Soviet Union has never taken upon itself the responsibility—objective or other wise—of undermining imperialism. It is imperialist reaction which charges the USSR with fomenting revolutions everywhere to undermine imperialism.

Nor has the Soviet Union ever taken upon itself the responsibility for doing what the U.S. working class itself will do, namely, bring socialism into existence in the U.S. Of course, when one lacks faith and confidence in the U.S. working class, as the LOM does, then it can claim to be for socialism only on the premise that the Soviet Union exports it to be welcomed by non-working-class sectors in the USA.

Underlying this thinking is the Trotskyite dictum of "permanent revolution" which would require that the Soviet Union carry out its revolution around the world. It is this Trotskyite doctrine which the defenders of imperialism attribute to the USSR in order to justify anti-Soviet policies, imperialist aggression and nuclear blackmail.

Such misrepresentations buttress those who embrace the two-power equal-responsibility myth. Having the effect of casting doubt on the sincerity of Soviet peace initiatives, it only serves the cold warriors and has a divisive, immobilizing effect in the peace movements.

These are among the ideological influences that must be exposed and isolated in waging peace. It is necessary to be alert to everything and anything that hampers and hinders the struggle for peace. For example, consider the concept that the struggle for peace is for the middle class and intellectuals while the economic struggle is for the working class. This is a negation of the most important social force in the fight for peace. It is a variation of the idea that the working class has lost all potential for progressive, let alone revolutionary action. It betrays a belief that the working class is interested only in immediate bread-and-butter questions of the day.

Such an outlook precludes the possibility of

raising the level of working-class consciousness above the level of trade unionism to class consciousness. Today's requirements for class consciousness include, and cannot do without, rejection of anti-Sovietism, anti-communism, racism and war. And today's working class gravitates more readily to this higher level of consciousness.

The reality is that the working class, to a growing degree, is involved in the struggle for peace, as trade unionists and through religious, social, community and fraternal organizations. That is why the trade union leadership, which the pseudo-Left sectarians dismiss as fully beholden to U.S. imperialism's goal of world domination, comes out in growing numbers against one or another foreign or military policy of the U.S. government.

The conventions of the steel and auto unions, of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, representing all unions in basic industry, and the unions in service and of government workers have all taken strong positions for peace, opposing a number of Reagan foreign policies, against Reaganism in general, against the ultra-Right and neo-fascism.

One year ago, the AFL-CIO convention adopted a policy statement which "... welcomes the resumption of Geneva negotiations between the USSR and the USA and endorses the objective of a balanced reduction of nuclear arms within a system of verification guaranteeing collective security."

At last year's convention, this stand was reaffirmed and the delegates defeated the attempt of the CIA-controlled International Department of the AFL-CIO to place the trade unions in support of aid to the Contra terrorists against the Nicaraguan government. The trade unions were the main force in organizing the 200,000-strong peace demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on April 25th (1985).

In June 1987, representatives of 26 of the largest national peace, disarmament, religious and social justice organizations met in a "Disarmament Working Conference" and adopted as primary goals these two objectives:

- 1 • Abolish all nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

2 • Establish a global system based on common security for all nations and peoples.

The idea that the class interests of the working class have to be subordinated to the demand to end the nuclear war danger bears the germ of another unreal concept, namely, that the struggle for socialism must be deferred in the interest of advancing the quest for nuclear disarmament.

These are wrong concepts, placed in the wrong way. In no way should it be inferred that working-class interests conflict with ending the danger of nuclear war. The truth is that the interests of the working class call for the speediest, most effective solution to the problem of the nuclear arms race, for ending it and moving on to world peace.

That is why the bold, creative initiatives of the Soviet Union have favorably impressed the working class and people of the United States. As for the class struggle, no one can stop it; the task is to participate in it in a way that advances the cause of peace, that links peace with the immediate needs of the class and people.

It is not the fight against nuclear war that impedes the movement towards socialism. Rather, it is reluctance of the imperialists to shed old policies based on mutual assured destruction (MAD), the overkill equilibrium known as "the balance of terror" that acts as a roadblock. The sooner that roadblock can be removed, the sooner the whole historic march to mankind's socialist future will be sped.

Nothing has given the people of the United States such a great lift in their hopes for peace, nothing has heartened them so much as the worldshaking peace momentum initiated by the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev.

The world bastion of working-class power, the USSR, had the wisdom and the will to work to change the world agenda from military confrontation to cooperation for mutual and common security against nuclear war. The way in which the Soviet Union today conducts foreign policy, helps to dispel the myth of a "Soviet threat." It is having a decisive influence on the thinking of millions. Reflecting this, Cyrus Vance, former Secretary of State, and Professor Robert Lengwald, director of the Harriman In-

stitute of Columbia University, acknowledge that the Soviet Union links its national security to mutual security with other countries and rejects the concept of achieving security at the expense of other nations.⁸

The chairman of the board of "People for the American Way," a former 8-term Republican congressman from Alabama, John Buchanan, says he is convinced that Mikhail Gorbachev is truly interested in working towards peace, in working for disarmament and the normalization of relations.⁸

Jay Higginbotham, director of the Municipal Archives of Mobile, Alabama, observes that "the Soviet Union is now threatening to become the world's moral leader."⁹

Indeed, the Soviet Union's bold, innovative and consistent quest for peace has invested it with a moral authority that evokes the applause and support of people in practically all walks of life. Last May, the U.S. Information Bureau found that "the overwhelming majority in Britain, France and West Germany believe the USSR deserves more credit than the United States for progress in arms control."¹⁰

And the influential *Foreign Policy* magazine reported that "the British now see the United States as a 'greater threat to world peace' than the Soviet Union by a margin of 37 percent to 33 percent" and further, that, "similar attitudes are developing in other Western European countries."¹¹

Several polls in the United States report the overwhelming popularity of the Soviet Union's peace initiatives.

Moving against this stream are the majority of Sovietologists who believe the only way the Soviet Union can move forward is by returning to capitalism and who see nothing but dire consequences from the Soviet peace diplomacy. In their front rank stand Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski who remain staunch defenders of the policy of nuclear deterrence, of mutually assured destruction.

Since Kissinger, Brzezinski and other "experts" with whom they agree are foremost defenders of the interests of U.S. imperialism, one must ask: What about the inherently aggressive, world-dominating nature of imperialism? Does

this innate evil automatically die or disappear in the age of nuclear weapons?

It stands to reason that imperialists, as human beings, might want to live, to avoid their own deaths and the death of their system in a nuclear war. Therefore, imperialism can be compelled to rein in its world-conquering, military compulsions. Experience has shown, as in the Korean and Vietnam wars, that imperialism can be forced to retreat. But does this mean that its drive, its impulse to dominate others has been ended?

Blocked one way, imperialism seeks outlets for its innate tendency in other ways and forms, such as: attempts to bypass and violate peace and disarmament accords; resort to clandestine warfare, sabotage, assassination, crop destruction; fomenting civil strife; instigating local wars; misusing tourism for provocations, etc. Irangate lifted but a small corner of the dollar curtain behind which these activities take place.

All of this points up the fact that waging peace is a complex multifaceted, many-level struggle which must be carried out at all levels of society. It is especially the problem of waging peace at the grass roots level that must receive most attention. It is there that the guarantees can be created to prevent imperialist governments from violating treaties; it is at that level that the power can be generated to curb the aggression-for-conquest and social-revenge instincts of imperialism.

The fact that the Soviet Union advances initiatives in many different areas to safeguard peace, points up the validity of taking into account all possible contingencies and utilizing every possibility. An important example of this is demonstrated by the USSR's proposals for strengthening the United Nations, including its peace-keeping activities. This is necessary if incendiary brush fires, so-called local wars, are to be extinguished before they flare into wider wars with world-destroying potentials. This implies the use of armed forces when necessary, as has been done a number of times already by the United Nations.

Such a peacekeeping measure was taken by the Warsaw Pact troops when they prevented Czechoslovakia from being transformed into a dagger pointed at the heart of socialism in the lands east, north and south of its borders. Not one drop of blood was shed in that successful rebuff to imperialism's attempt to roll back socialism despite the fact that Prague swarmed with U.S., West German, and other, secret agents posing as tourists.

The possibilities of similar threats to peace continues to exist and a responsible peace policy takes such contingencies into account.

In this respect, the new military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact nations' armed forces is a historic first in world history. It should be brought to the attention of all who cherish peace in all countries. It is a powerful call for peace, an example of new thinking by the military, a new weapon, if you will, in the fight for peace.

It is a commentary on a serious weakness of the peace movements in the United States that there is no or little knowledge of this new military doctrine was well as the Soviet Union's role in the United Nations, its joint Delhi Declaration with India and its numerous other initiatives for peace. This ignorance is a reflection of the influence of anti-Sovietism in the peace movement. It is a measure of how much remains to be done to win many activists in the peace movement to understand that anti-Sovietism leads but in one direction—towards war. The road to peace can be traversed only by rejecting anti-Sovietism. □

Notes

- 1 Bantam, New York, 1980: cited in *CALC Report* (Clergy and Laity Concerned) Vol. III, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 3
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16
3. *Ibid.*, p. 8
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15
5. *The Nation*, Editorial, Dec. 12, 1987
6. *Line of March Discussion Bulletin*, No. 4, 1987, p. 11
7. *Political Affairs*, November 1987, pp. 11 and 14
8. *Op. cit.*, Note 1, p. 23
9. *The Churchman*, November 1987, p. 6
10. *Time*, July 13, 1987
11. Chas. W. Maynes, "America's Chance", *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1987

Fighting for Jobs By Amending the Consitution

JOHN HENRY

A critical question for the working class in the U.S. is full employment, and related to it, raising the quality of life for all working people. This will take a mass, organized movement which will, in stages, reform, then revolutionize existing relations of production. A vital feature of this movement will be the legal struggle, because changes in the legal relations will also institutionalize the new economic relations.

This is why tactics and strategy in the economic struggle must always include political and legislative goals. A fundamental goal of the economic struggle is the right to a job and this essay argues for a specific programmatic demand to amend the Constitution for a right to a job and a decent living.

The special contribution Communists bring to the people's movement is class consciousness. In its highest form, Marxism-Lenism, this class consciousness represents a science. This science explains that the working class under capitalism is the focal point for initiating and completing all progressive social change. As Gus Hall, national chairman of the CPUSA has said,

What develops class consciousness is a very important question. It does not develop automatically or spontaneously. There has to be an injection and only our Party can do this.

Class consciousness develops by explanations of how the system works, explanations of what exploitation is, labor as a source of value, explanations of class struggle and socialism, etc.¹

Communists focus on the working class and the class struggle because they have an historical-materialist perspective. That is, that social ideas, ideals and laws reflect and are ultimately determined by relations and forces of material production; and not the other way

around. Thus, we see constitutional changes, like all legal changes, as ultimately being determined by economic and class relations.

In the U.S.A., we have capitalist relations of production, wage labor and private ownership of the means of production. The system of wage labor makes the need for a job a fundamental issue for the overwhelming majority of the people, who having no ownership of the means of production can only live by selling their labor. They, therefore, have a basic interest in supporting the concept of including the right to a job in the fundamental law of the nation, the Constitution.

Furthermore, in a country where the bourgeoisie is the ruling class, the Constitution reflects and protects the critical bourgeois interests in capitalist relations of production—the right to private ownership of the means of production, which implies the right to seek maximum private profits. This concept is codified in the Fifth Amendment's so-called "Taking" clause which provides that no private property shall be taken for public purposes without just compensation.

Briefly stated, the goal must be, through amendment, to establish a Constitutional provision on the right to a job and also to provide that it has priority over the right to ownership and control of private property in the means of production. For example, the rights of workers to their jobs would take priority over the corporate prerogative to close a plant, shop or office.

It would be wrong to conclude that a right to a job and decent living can be fully guaranteed under capitalist relations of production. Yet it is important to struggle for reforms (in a revolutionary manner), toward full employment, even short of socialism.

In the U.S., the struggle for the right to a job and a decent material living is a legal and political struggle for the most fundamental hu-

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man right; it is a struggle to rewrite aspects of our present property relations in order to bring them closer into line with the needs of the people. This struggle is a precondition for expanding many other human rights. Freedom is rooted in the mastery of necessity.²

Because of its place in production, the working class must fight to progressively change property laws and rights and, consequently, other human rights. The ability of the working class to do this depends on its level of class independence, its level of class consciousness. An element of this consciousness is the awareness of its own legal goals.

In the concrete circumstances, of U.S. national history, those legal goals include the struggle for constitutional amendments.

THE CONSTITUTION'S AMENDMENT PROCESS

Marxism-Leninism is not applied abstractly as a dogma, but concretely, considering specific historical circumstances which include political and legal history and tradition. To the extent that this tradition has produced democratic and progressive elements, it must be fully and enthusiastically embraced.

In American history, through the struggle of its people, the Constitution's Article V, encodes a provision for amendment which is a dialectical legal and political mechanism. It is a recognition that social change and development are inevitable and that they must be reflected in the nation's fundamental law. This section, used justly, makes the Constitution truly alive. It is a time-tested method which must be studied and used as a valid form for change—through democratic reforms and beyond.

Consequently, one must become more expert in the Constitution's Article V amendment provision, its procedures and requirements. In the first place, a strategy must be developed to apply the provision to win the working class's battle for full employment.

Because a two-thirds majority of the Congress or the state legislatures is required to propose a constitutional amendment, and the approval of three-fourths of the states is required for its ratification, passage of any amendment

must be based on a truly mass movement. The amendment-path of legal change, therefore is inherently a method for involving masses in making law as opposed to a few lawyers arguing before a few judges in the courts.

The constitutional arena of struggle provides the opportunity for building progressive majorities to directly and permanently trump Bork-like judges. Amendment of the Constitution by an anti-Reaganite, anti-racist, anti-monopoly, pro-peace majority by-passes future as well as current Supreme Court justices.

Of course, the timing of such a campaign would have to be chosen carefully. Nonetheless, Gus Hall's projection in the main report to the 24th Convention of the Communist Party, USA, that there are now emerging progressive majorities, points to the need to consider the amendment campaign as an aspect of mass strategy. These emerging (and merging) majorities and the recent flurry of calls and actions by trade unionists, workers, members of Congress, presidential candidates for legal insitutionalization of a right to a job and decent living³ suggest that sufficient popular support for a constitutional amendment campaign may come about sooner rather than later. The Left must prepare to equip the people with effective legal machinery for carving in stone the right to a job.

Such a "Right to a Job Amendment Campaign" cannot be a substitute for other job-creating legislation as the Hayes-Conyers Bill, or other anti-plant closing legislation. Rather it should dovetail and flow naturally from them.

Achieving the amendment would require mass marches and demonstrations. It would require electing a two-thirds majority pro-working class Congress and pro-working-class majorities in three quarters of the state legislatures or state constitutional conventions. This would require broad political work in the 1988 elections and beyond. But aren't majority pro-working class legislatures the goal anyway?

The original Bill of Rights was made the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The Economic or Workers' Bill of Rights is of comparably equal import for our era.

The work for support of the Hayes bills

builds support for the idea of the right to a job amendment. In fact, the "Fundamental Rights" section of the Quality of Life Action Act could be the heart of the Amendment.

A DRAFT XXVII AMENDMENT

★ Section 1. Every adult American able and willing to earn a living through paid work has the right to and shall have a free choice among opportunities for useful, productive and fulfilling paid employment at decent real wages or for self employment.

★ Section 2. Every adult American unable to work for pay or find employment pursuant to Section 1. has the right to and shall be provided by the Federal and State governments an adequate standard of living that rises with increases in the wealth and productivity of society.

★ Section 3. The Federal and State governments shall serve as the employers of last resort in insuring fulfillment of Section 1.

★ Section 4. In a case where Section 1. is in conflict with the Amendment V provision reading "Nor shall private property be taken from public use without just compensation," Section 1. of Amendment XXVII shall prevail.

★ Section 5. The common law doctrine of employment-at-will is hereby abolished. All employment discharge shall be with just cause.

★ Section 6. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Pursuant to Section 5., congressional legislation, such as the Hayes bills, would carry out the details of the constitutional amendment mandate, just as the civil rights acts carry out the mandates of the several civil rights constitutional amendments.

Collective discussion and thinking must determine whether other rights, such as the right to organize unions, to decent housing, to adequate medical care, to a good education, etc. would best be incorporated into this or other amendments.

The Constitution's Fifth Amendment "Taking Clause" makes imperative the constitutionalization of the job creation and protection rights

in the Hayes-Conyers Bill or any anti-plant closing legislation. There is no question that legislation that challenges the monopolies' prerogatives in use of their capital, the *only* way to guarantee jobs and full employment, would be attacked as unconstitutional based on that Fifth Amendment provision, which, as said earlier, says, "nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

The "Taking Clause" is *the* capitalist constitutional provision. Thus, Mobil Oil Corporation celebrates the Bicentennial of the Constitution with an advertisement in the *New York Times*, October 10, 1987 hailing the "enshrinement within the Constitution . . . by a few phrases and clauses often overlooked" the legal "springs of our modern free-market economy," the protection against "the danger of the levelling spirit . . ." The passage referred to turns out to be the U.S. Constitution's principal guarantee of (private) property rights. The bourgeois ruling class prefers that this clause remain obscure and overlooked.

The law has a hierarchical structure. That is, the Constitution prevails over congressional legislation when the two are in conflict. Therefore, the right to a job must be elevated to constitutional status to avoid being trumped by the "Taking" clause.

The movement-for-jobs's legal aims must be well chosen. The nation is ripe for a right-to-a-job campaign. But the legal form must be as profound as the substance. In the U.S., rights are made legally most binding when they are written into the Constitution.

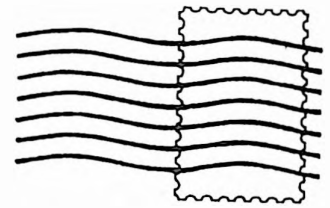
Certainly, fighting for such an amendment would be a truly special way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. □

Notes

1. "Trade Union Work—Plus! The Communist Essence," *Political Affairs*, April 1986.
2. See, Herbert Aptheker, *The Nature of Democracy, Freedom and Revolution*, International Publishers, 1981, p. 60; and, Maurice Cornforth *The Theory of Knowledge*, International Publishers, 1981, Chapter 13.
3. See, Bill Dennison and Ben Riskin, "Needed; A Workers Bill of Rights," *The People's Daily World*, Oct. 22, 1987.

Letters

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THE SCHOOLS CRISIS: DON'T EXAGGERATE METHOD

As someone who has been deeply interested and involved in educational work for over forty years, I was pleased to see that the January issue of *Political Affairs* contained an article on this critical issue. Since comment and discussion were invited, I offer below my own reactions and opinions.

Although the article, "Meeting the Crisis in Public Education," deals with the effects of government policies and of capitalism on education, it fails to place them in proper perspective. The public schools in our country exist—now, as always—to serve the needs of the system which sustains them. (It does this despite the fact that it was the labor movement which first fought to establish public education in our country. Educational policies, and the funding used to implement these policies are controlled by the various governmental agencies—which themselves are tools of monopoly capitalism.

It should be evident then, that in times when industrial growth and expansion require a larger skilled work force, the schools are geared up to provide one. In times of depression, or when automation results in a lesser

demand for workers, the public schools are also "re-tooled" so they they turn out fewer "products" with the necessary skills.

In today's high-tech economy, when capitalism needs only a small work force of highly skilled technicians, the majority of our youth are again, so far as the ruling class is concerned, expendable (as is pointed out in the article).

Understanding that the school system reflects the society and its policies, is basic to our analysis of existing problems—from underfunding, to dilapidated buildings; from overcrowding and excessive class size to overt racism and the sabotage of bi-lingual education; from the open active entry of big business into the classroom to the shameful failure of the schools to arm millions of workingclass and minority children with even minimal work skills. Keeping our eye on the system is a basic requirement for planning our program and course of action.

Nor is this the first time that there is a "crisis in public education" about "who is to be taught and what is to be taught." Such crisis are inherent in the very nature of the system and the contradictions in the educational system are bound to sharpen as the contradictions

of monopoly capitalism itself are bound to sharpen.

I think, therefore, it is wrong to say in the Sept-Oct. '87 issue of *Political Affairs*, page 25, that the educational reform movement is an attempt to "remake the educational system to meet the needs of monopoly." In my view the current "reform movement" is yet another example of the system adapting to the needs of the moment. Since it will never admit that it deliberately fails millions of children, its spokesmen always concoct new educational jargon and pseudo-theories to cover up the basic truths and to "sell" the latest cure-all programs to teachers, parents and public in general.

Whenever the failures of the educational system become so blatant that there is widespread protest, it especially behooves Communists and others on the Left to keep their thinking rooted in Marxist premises and not to get caught up in the mumbo-jumbo of all the latest educational fads and experiments. This is not to say that it isn't possible, indeed absolutely mandatory, to force the system to adopt progressive changes. But we must vigilantly guard against falling into the trap of confusing questions of basic educational policy and the content of curriculum with

questions of methodology.

This error has been made many times before (e.g. John Dewey's "Progressive Education," conflicting approaches as to when and how to teach reading, when and how to start "formal schooling," "Higher Horizon," and the "More Effective Schools" programs etc.)

The old saw about being doomed to repeat the same mistakes if we don't learn from history, still applies. Let's not get caught up in debates about educational methodology like "creative teaching" versus "rote teaching." It's time-consuming, non-productive, and diverts us from important areas of creative struggle.

If there is anything we know about how children learn, it is that there is an awful lot we still do not know. But this much is evident; there are some things children learn by being helped to think them through logically; some things children learn by being guided to observe the world around them and to use all their senses; some things a child needs to master through repetition (or rote) after she or he has been helped to understand the underlying principles (eg. multiplication tables, chemical formulas); some ideas children must learn to both absorb and express by themselves through stories, poems, art and music; some learning requires mastery of specific skills and some require the development of critical thinking and evaluation. All of these and more call for different

teaching techniques and methods. Furthermore, different children learn in different ways and at different speeds. A *creative* teacher will not become a dogmatist about one or another method, but will constantly adapt and revise his or her technique to suit the needs of the moment, the needs of children and the subject at hand. That's being creative!

Regrettably, the article does not deal at all with educational policies or curriculum content. To my mind these questions are much more basic and important than methodology. However, since it would require a rather long, detailed discussion by itself, it would warrant a separate article. I hope *PA* can arrange to have one appear soon.

Clearer basic insight also helps to better define our areas and methods of struggle. While being a good teacher is a *sine qua non* for every Communist—as it should be for all who carry the responsibility of raising the young—overly emphasizing this can lead to omitting the Communist "plus." We must operate in a broader arena if we are to be effective. Those teachers who spend all their out-of-classroom time planning lessons and correcting papers limit their impact to one classroomful of children. And, as important as those children are, that is not enough of an "excuse" to get out of active involvement in broader social involvement. We need to become leaders among our colleagues, the parents, in

our communities. How do we do this?

First, we ourselves must be active, articulate, involved union members—in our own



schools and in our locals. On this point, I think the article by the National Teacher's Commission in the January *PA* contains some contradictions. Unfortunately, it also contains some wishful thinking. On page 23 it states, ". . . it doesn't take long for the teachers . . . to learn and appreciate that they are . . . workers whose future well-being is linked to collective action . . ." This would imply self-realization on the part of many teachers. But on page 24, the article asks, "How do we develop class-consciousness among those with whom we work?" And on page 27, we read, "Deepening the class consciousness of teachers leads to strengthening teacher participation in the mass social movements." From my years of

experience, most teachers, do not consider themselves workers, nor are they active, aware trade unionists. In many schools, the union itself not only fails to hold meetings, process grievances, etc. In fact, the union encourages teachers to regard themselves as professionals, thereby suppressing even more their workingclass outlook. Therefore, it is all the more our responsibility to deepen class and union consciousness by raising issues, channeling grievances, organizing collective actions around issues that concern us. These activities may at times take place within the union proper, or through rank-and-file formations. Where the issues coincide with the concerns of parents and communities, we form coalitions for action on those issues with other forces.

Trade unionism among teachers goes back over 70 years. It includes the long and glorious history of the Left-progressive Teachers Union. Many pioneering, important achievements of those years have laid the groundwork for today's opportunities to achieve further progress. The employment of Black teachers (in other than segregated southern schools), the abolition of the I.Q. test, the establishment of the principle that every child can learn, the inauguration of bi-lingual education, the winning of auxiliary services, providing lunches and milk in schools, gaining recognition of a

teacher's right to marry and have children, winning the right to collective bargaining for teachers, as well as many other victories were won through long and often bitter struggles.

The lessons of those struggles can be of immeasurable help in assessing the situation today. That includes evaluating our work in our immediate communities, cities as well as nationally. It also includes reviewing the organizational forms which will best suit our needs—coalitions, caucuses, rank and file organizations, ad hoc groups, etc. It means analyzing our weaknesses and failures, building on our strengths, and moving ahead to new grounds.

Yet all of the foregoing is still only a partial fulfillment of the the concept of the Communist "plus." In the process of proving ourselves to be good teachers, informed leaders, reliable activists, we are constantly demonstrating what it means to be a Communist. Yes, our basic area of struggle remains centered in our schools and in our union. Our concentration focuses on organizing to improve working and learning conditions; on helping our co-workers become class conscious, active unionists, on working with parents and others in the community on problems of common interest and concern. When we win the confidence of colleagues to the point where we can proudly say "yes I am a Communist" then we have laid the basis for recruiting and

ultimately building a shop club.

Although the article covers much ground, there are still many areas which are either omitted or just mentioned in passing. School funding and budgets need to be dealt with more fully. Racism is discussed only in the context of methodology; it is a much broader problem which requires greater in-depth analysis. Questions of the National Education Association (NEA) in relation to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as well as the AFL-CIO need to be explored. Questions of Shanker's role as a member of the Carnegie Commission should be aired. The role and history of rank and file organization should be recounted. The history and function of the National Teacher's Commission should also be discussed.

I have tried to restrict my comments to just a few salient points, particularly the central idea of recognizing the public school system as a "tool" of the capitalist system. Based on this, whether the system can be "wrested" from the ruling class (as the article states on page 28) so long as the ruling class is still in power. However, we can and must fight for the kinds of schools that will, as the article states, "prepare children and youth to live meaningful lives with useful jobs." This continues to be one of our main goals.

JUDITH ALBERT,
Retired NYC teacher

ABOUT HOUSING AND THE RATE OF PROFIT

I read with interest your January issue on the homeless. Two points seem to be in order.

First was the point made in one of the articles on the alleged tendency of the rate of profit to fall, which the author says is a reason for expanding investment in real estate. Marx stressed that this law was merely a tendency which materialized only over long periods and particular circumstances, owing to the counteracting influence of a number of factors.

The U.S. government, in order to support the drive of capital against labor, put out cooked up figures purporting to show a decline in the rate of profit over a certain postwar period. This was eagerly seized on by a number of social democratic economists, headed by Gordon, who got top billing in the *New York Times* magazine, to show what "good Marxists" they were; meanwhile providing much valuable ammunition to the capitalist class.

Concrete analysis of the data for the United States, over the past half century, shows a distinctly rising rate of profit trend, resulting from the fact that the rate of surplus value increased much faster than the organic composition of capital. Indeed, if this were not so, our own publication of convincing facts about the soaring profits of the capitalist corporations and the increased unevenness of

income distribution would not be true.

A comment on the issue of ground rents and homelessness—Capitalists, as pointed out, especially in modern large conglomerates, readily shift capital into those areas momentarily providing the highest rates of profit, and out of them when the rate of profit there declines. Thus the Texas real estate boom has been turned into the Texas real estate/banking crisis. Land prices can go down, as well as up. The sharp decline in prices for farm land—the basis for ground rent—was a major factor in causing the bankruptcy of so many midwestern farmers. The stock market decline may well mark the beginning of the end of the commercial real estate boom in New York. The real estate boom in New York was precisely because rising rates of profit fueled a stock market boom, soaring financial activity and employment, rates of profit fueled a stock market boom, soaring financial activity and employment increased demand for office space, luxury apartments, etc.

I feel however, the author, Dolores Dwyer, unduly singles out ground rent as the basis for the housing crisis of New York working people. Certainly, a proportion of surplus value goes to ground rent, as well as to banking capital (interest), stock owners (dividends), corporate buccaneers (insiders' profits, etc). These forms are all included in virtually every form

of capitalist enterprise, whether it be manufacturing or the real estate business.

In my view it is not true that the rents charged in New York, for example, are *mainly* ground rent, as the article states. As I understand it, the proportion of "costs" typically are two-thirds structure, one-third land.

That is, two-thirds of the surplus value involved in the valuation of the building represents the exploitation of construction workers, building material workers etc. and one-third land rent, subtracted from the overall pool of surplus value. Thus, the tenants' rent may be attributed two-thirds to the owner of the building and one-third to the owner of the land.

Similar ratios in my village, Croton, are 70 percent structures, 30 percent land.

Certainly nationalization, as pointed out, would be an important, very radical step. That is why it was done early in the USSR, and in some other revolutionary situations.

But in my view government domination of housing construction, with major trade union influence, and setting of rents related to ability to pay, is especially important. There is quite a bit of that in a number of West European capitalist countries, where workers' housing costs are more moderate than in the United States, although nothing like the favorable situation in socialist countries.

VIC PERLO, Croton, NY

MORE ON 'STRANGE FRUIT'

I enjoyed Angela Davis' informative article, "Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit': Music and Social Consciousness" (*PA*, February 1988).

As to the author of the song, Lewis Allan, I think your readership would be interested in the following:

1. Lewis Allan's real name was Abel Meeropol.

2. He was the adoptive father of Robbie and Michael, the two orphaned children of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. (They took Meeropol as their surname.)

3. He won an Academy Award for the words to the

song "The House I Live In."

4. He was an accomplished poet, all of whose works show the best, noblest, most progressive side of humanity. I consider him to be the Berthold Brecht of the U.S.

5. He was persecuted during the witch-hunt period by New York State's Rapp-Coudert Commission.

6. He died late in 1986.

All in all, he was a thoroughly admirable man!

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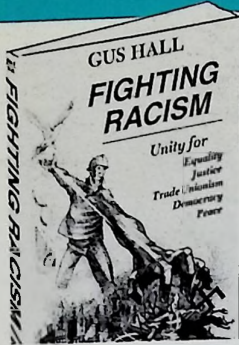
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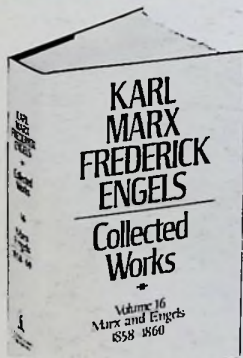


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