

# Political Affairs

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

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## 25th National Convention CPUSA

# MADVISM MARXISM LENINISM AFFIRMED

- Greetings From Around the World To CPUSA
- Workers Speak: Delegates Remarks
- The destruction of Americas children - Phillip Bonosky
- The 25th Convention and Party unity - Jarvis Tyner

**Gus  
Hall:**  
Report to  
25th National  
Convention, CPUSA

# *Political Affairs*

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The Editorial Board of Political Affairs is pleased to introduce its new Editor, Joe Sims. Sims was elected to this position following the resignation of its previous editor, Len Levenson.

Sims, 34, comes to PA after having worked in the Young Communist League and the Communist Party of New York state as Education Coordinator. An eighteen year member of the Communist Party, Sims has been a member of its National Committee of the Communist Party since 1987 and was elected to its National Board at the Cleveland convention. We look forward to a long and productive working relationship.

The Editorial Board apologizes to PA readers for the lateness of the January issue. The delay was caused by organizational problems resulting from the resignation of the previous editor. The next issue will be a joint February/March edition. Thank you for your patience and continued support.

This issue of Political Affairs is devoted to the 25th Convention of the Communist Party. This was a historic convention.

At its end the working-class delegates had spoken and emerged united, revitalized, and committed to face the challenges of the class struggle in the 1990's. The multi-racial, multinational, male and female delegates in their overwhelming majority declared that they had had enough of factionalism, and set themselves the task of building the Party in the center of the struggle against the economic crisis.

Enthusiasm, excitement and confidence characterized the delegates' mood. They expressed renewed and deepened commitments to Marxism-Leninism, the working class, industrial concentration, and a higher level of activity in the fight against racism, the oppression of women and for U.S. "Bill of Rights" socialism. A re-dedication to these goals were the convention's hallmarks.

As Black, Brown, white, Native American and Asian speakers reported on experiences from many fronts of struggle they were greeted by standing ovations. The delegates were, after all, leaders and key participants in these struggles. Sixty three percent of them were workers; fourteen percent from basic industry; thirty percent were racially and nationally oppressed. Nearly fifty percent were women. City council members and other elected officials, leaders of Central Labor Councils and local trade union rank and file movements, peace leaders and front rankers in the fights against racism, anti-Semitism and for national and racial equality were all present. Farmers, senior citizens, students, intellectuals and professionals were also represented.

The 25th Convention was proof that our Party remains a party of the new type in the Leninist sense and that its most dynamic force is at the grass roots, organized in clubs and districts.

The Convention's highlight was its decision to advance a fighting program to move the Party forward in the 1990's. The fight against the economic crisis' devastating impact was deemed the most important issue. Post-convention work will focus on developing an effective fightback against homelessness, unemployment and the crisis in healthcare. Delegates also placed before the Party the critical importance of defeating Bush and the ultra-right in November's election and the full mobilization of the Party organization to achieve this goal.

Driven by the overwhelming need to move the Party into these struggles, the delegates rose up and delivered a resounding defeat to the factional center. A minority within the leadership, against the will of the majority and

the Constitution of the Party, had sought through factional means to seize power and transform the Party into an amorphous social democratic-type organization. The very survival of the Party and its revolutionary essence was at stake.

Yielding to right opportunist pressures at home and the ascendancy of counterrevolutionary forces in the European socialist countries, including the Soviet

Union, and promising themselves on the ambiguous platform of "renewal," factional forces in the leadership ultimately abandoned the working class and Marxism-Leninism. Significantly, they sought to destroy Party democracy and democratic centralism.

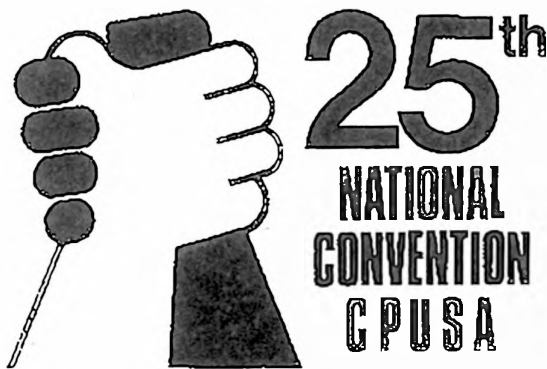
The great majority of the over 500 delegates greeted the report of National Chairman Gus Hall. His declaration that factionalism must end and that unity in struggle must be fought for was enthusiastically embraced.

A new generation of leaders were elected to the Party's National Committee. Not only are they younger, but they come from the ranks of the Party organization. The new leadership is more workingclass, more multinational and multiracial, and has a larger number of women.

There can be no doubt: the outcome of the 25th Convention is important to the international communist and workingclass movements. As Communist Parties throughout the world regroup, the fact that the CPUSA, working in the most powerful imperialist nation, did not bend to opportunist pressure, will surely give confidence to others. It is of singular importance that the recently-held South African Communist Party's Congress, the Congress of Cuban Communists, the Congresses of the Communist Party of Spain and the Greek Communist Party reached similar conclusions. Our decisions are in line with other those of other leading parties.

Now we must build and recruitment must accelerate. Surely, many who signed the "Initiative" out of a desire to

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# Forge Unity through Struggle

GUS HALL

Since the 24th convention of our Party the world has undergone many quantitative and qualitative changes, some positive, some negative. It has been an extraordinary period of turmoil and shifting sands politically, ideologically and economically.

There have been some shifts in the world balance of forces. During this period U.S. imperialism has pursued policies of raw economic, military, financial, covert and overt aggression.

Domestically, the government and monopoly capital have pursued aggressive policies to increase the rate of class exploitation, carried out anti-labor, anti-union, racist policies and generally turned up the heat against the people.

History may well record the 25th as "The Era of Crises" convention.

Our society is in the grip of a series of crises within the overall general crisis of U.S. capitalism. There is a social, political and economic crisis, including a cyclical economic crisis that is chronic.

And within this series of crises there are specific multiple crises. For example, within the economic crisis, there is a crisis of unemployment, hunger, homelessness, housing, health care and education. And now we face the life-threatening, earth-threatening crisis of the environment. Permanent crises have engulfed all areas of life in our capitalist society.

On the world scene, as you know, we now have to deal with a crisis in the socialist world. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania, socialism is on the ropes. In the old GDR, it has just about disappeared.

In the Soviet Union, the socialist system is under attack by pro-capitalist, right-wing elements like Yeltsin, Yakovlev, Shevardnadze and others in dominant positions, who are working to push the Soviet Union off its socialist path. The Soviet Union itself is being systematically dismembered. Wrong policies and misleadership by Gorbachev and company continue to make a shambles of the socioeconomic system. The socialist world as a cohesive world entity, with influence and power, is just about nonexistent.

The last four years in this era of crises have seen the climax of the onslaught of the Reagan-Bush years. Every crisis in the world has been aggravated and deepened by ten years of the most reactionary, pro-monopoly, pro-imperialist policies of Reagan-Bush. The vicious corporate attacks on the unions and the living standards of the American working class originate in the same think tanks that mastermind the "communism is dead" big lie cam-

paigns. While capitalism brutalizes and impoverishes the American people, imperialism sells capitalist snake oil as a cure-all in the socialist countries.

We are confronted with two different kinds of crises in two different societies. It is truly a different kind of a world that we now live in.

The crisis of capitalism is systemic. Crisis and misery are built into the system. Capitalism is driven and fueled by a profit-hungry ruling class, with no social conscience, no ethics, no morality or sense of social responsibility. On the other hand, the crisis of socialism is mainly caused by wrong, anti-socialist policies. The system itself is based on inherently humanitarian precepts.

**THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM** ■ The reason the effects of the present economic crisis are so devastating is that the cyclical crisis is superimposed on a serious overall economic situation.

For example, 25 percent of all tax monies collected are wasted on interest payments on loans the federal government owes the banks. This has become an ever-deepening sinking hole. If one adds the ever-growing debts of the states, cities and people, the hole becomes a sinking cavern. It acts like the powerful vacuum of the lightless sinking holes in outer space. Everything is threatened with being pulled into a bottomless pit of destruction.

Poverty and hunger are now constant companions of the majority of Americans. One out of every ten Americans are now forced to apply for food stamps. In just one year, from 1990 to 1991, two million more people fell below the official poverty level.

The standard of living of U.S. workers has been on a steady decline since the beginning of the 70's. There is a crisis of the increasing millions who are homeless. It is a sad fact that so many Americans are becoming immune to the sight of hungry children and their mothers on the freezing sidewalks of our cities. For many, they have become almost invisible.

We must keep asking ourselves, are we also becoming immune when we see such sad sights? Are we angry enough at this inhumane system that brings such misery to millions? The crisis is wiping out many of the gains made in the past, including the gains won through affirmative action.

Because of the overriding policy of last-to-be-hired and first-to-be-fired African American workers are still the first to get pink slips. They are still the largest numbers on unemployment lines and in the ranks of the homeless. It is a crisis for whole generations of African American people.

Thus, one doesn't hear any talk in the African American community about whether we are in a recession or a depression because it doesn't matter what you

The following are excerpts from the report given by National Chairman Gus Hall to the 25th National Convention of the Communist Party, USA in Cleveland Ohio, December 5 - 1991.

call it, the result is homelessness, hunger and lack of medical care. Call it by its real name, racism.

The language is different in the barrios, in the Puerto Rican and Mexican American communities. But hunger, homelessness, hungry children, cold, heatless apartments, lack of warm clothing and medical care are the same in any language.

Speeches made and articles written, even by Communists, do not feed, clothe or shelter the poor. It takes organized struggle.

The brutal nature of capitalism is laid bare by the action of the Michigan State Legislature, that without excuses or apologies cut the last welfare lifelines for 84,000 people. The criteria for cutting off the lifelines is that if a person is well enough to work, then he or she is able to go out and search for nonexistent jobs. The Michigan courts have upheld this brutal act. The Michigan model is just the beginning of a policy that will spread to many other states. State governments, in a budget crunch, see holding off bankruptcy by cutting poor people's only lifelines — welfare and Medicaid. This is criminal and inhumane. It is a life or death crisis. As part of our convention, we also have to ask whether the factional situation has affected our participation in the struggles of our people. I think it has.

Some nine months ago, at a meeting of the National Committee, I was sharply criticized — I now think for factional reasons — for placing too much emphasis in my report on the economic crisis. Since then, it has become all too obvious that the main concern of the majority of American people is the economic crisis. This must also become the main concern of our Party.

We will be judged primarily not by what we say about world developments, but by what we say and do about the multiple crises we face in our own society. Of course we are internationalists. But our first responsibility, our primary allegiance, and greatest attention must be concentrated on the developments in our own country and their impact on our own people. This is where our creative energies must be focused.

**ECONOMIC CRISIS** ■ No longer able to deny the fact that Bush is the captain of an economic Titanic, the media have created the myth that "no one is minding the store," because the president is preoccupied with foreign policy and international issues. In fact, the Bush Administration is carrying out the policies of the "Reagan Revolution" — a planned, sophisticated and comprehensive domestic policy with the objective of making the rich richer by making working people poorer.

The quality of life for the majority of working-class families is slipping precisely because there is a big shift in wealth. The shift in income from the poorest 60 million to the richest five million has been \$150 billion per year for the past 15 years. The richest five million have a combined income of one trillion dollars. In per capita income, the richest have 50 times the income of the poorest. Gross corporate profits reached almost two trillion dollars last

year, which means the average income for corporate executives runs about \$300,000 per year.

And because of the lopsided loophole tax laws, corporate America pays a measly 22 percent of the total taxes, while working America carries the biggest burden, 52 percent. Tax rates for low-income groups have gone up more than 20 percent, while rates for the top 1 percent have declined by more than 20 percent.

The combined income of the upper crust of the capitalist class now exceeds the combined incomes of all production workers in manufacturing, mining, construction, transportation and public utilities, the main creators of material value.

Real wages have declined 18 percent since 1973, despite the rising productivity of labor. Between 1970 and 1989, the income gap between white and Black families went from 39 to 44 percent. By 1989 the 44 percent gap cost Black families \$120 billion, representing extra profits for employers.

The official unemployment count is over 8.5 million. But you have to add the million-plus "discouraged" workers who have stopped looking for work and have exhausted their unemployment benefits. Another 5.5 million are working part time, which adds up to a more accurate figure of 15 million unemployed. The official unemployment rate among African Americans is over 13 percent; among Latino workers, it is 10 percent. The fight over the new bill to extend unemployment benefits, which is woefully inadequate, was an example of the anti-working class, pro-corporate policies.

This agenda of shifting wealth from the working class to the rich is carried out through an anti-labor, anti-union and racist offensive by the state monopoly structure. It is done by intensifying the exploitation of labor and the superexploitation of African American and other racially and nationally oppressed workers.

Capitalism survives by going through law-governed economic crises. Just as there are political turning points, there are also economic turning points. We are at such a point now. This turning point is related to the general crisis of capitalism.

The artificially stimulated economic boom has run aground. The economy is in a serious crisis. Millions of workers in basic industries, and white collar and service sectors, have already been laid off. Bank failures and small business bankruptcies are reaching an all-time high. State and city governments are going broke. Unemployment insurance funds are drying up. Hunger and homelessness rise unabated. It is an every day crisis for tens of millions of working-class families. Racism doubles the impact of the crisis on racially and nationally oppressed families.

This crisis calls for an emergency approach to organization and struggle, an emergency approach to demand appropriation of funds for housing projects, for food and clothing, for jobs and rebuilding the cities. Even before the current wave of layoffs, there was a 30 percent unemployment rate for the African American community.

A new feature of the decay of capitalism is the chronic state of crisis facing young people and working-class youth in particular. There is growing poverty and homelessness among youth and children. An astounding 75 percent of working-class teenagers, Black, Brown and white, are unemployed in the major urban areas.

The economic and class issues are pushing young people in the direction of class consciousness and militancy. Youth and students are in a fighting mood. Students are taking to the streets in growing numbers to protest city, state and federal budget cuts and high tuition. In 1988 there were 15 school buildings taken over by students protesting budget cuts and tuition hikes; by 1990 there were 76 such actions.

For family farmers, the present crisis comes on top of a long-term crisis that is making the family farmer an extinct sector of U.S. agriculture.

The crisis will have ebbs and flows. But the overall direction is down. There is talk that the crisis will come to an end, that it has bottomed out. But for tens of millions it will never be over. For them, the crisis is a permanent condition.

Therefore, our work must not be based on the ups and downs of the present crisis, but on the long-range effects and problems the people face.

After each economic crisis the negative residue is bigger. And each boom means the bust will be deeper and last longer. After each bust, more and more people will be thrown into permanent crisis conditions.

Capitalism survives as state monopoly capitalism. Increasingly, the state becomes the support base for capitalism. The three-trillion-dollar and rising federal debt and the S&L bailout are proof of the extent of state support. A turning point is reached where the debt and the interest on the debt become permanent negative features of the economy. The enormous interest payments on the debt are a new feature of the general crisis of the system. The total debt of the economy — federal, corporate and personal debt — is now 11 trillion dollars. The interest payments, a major negative drag on the economy, now stand at over a trillion dollars.

At this point crises do not add to each other and interrelate with each other in a one-plus-one-equals-two manner. Instead they grow on each other geometrically. The radical nature of the current crisis demands radical proposals and solutions.

We must carry through in our proposals for emergency economic reconstruction of our country. At a minimum our program must include massive housing and job creation. It must include thousands of new hospitals and schools. It must include a massive program of rebuilding the basic infrastructure of our country's highways, bridges, mass transit systems and water and sewage systems. The transportation bill is but a down payment.

The money is there:

- \$200 billion from the military budget.

- \$300 billion from postponement of the interest payments on the federal government debt.

- Tax all income over \$100,000 at 100 percent rate.

- Billions more can be added to reconstruction funds by tax reform that makes the corporations pay, by closing tax abatement gifts to real estate interests, and by taking the obscene profits out of the banking and defense industries through public takeover.

It is clear that to take the money from where it is at to finance job creation projects, you have to cross the class line.

**CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT** ■ The past period has not seen the lessening of the class struggle, but rather its intensification.

With the election of Reagan in 1980, the onset of the deepest economic crisis since the 30's, and the increasing ability of monopoly to move its production operations to other sites at home and abroad, the ruling class stepped up its assault on the working class.

The assault was economic, political, and ideological. Its aim was to dramatically heighten the rate of exploitation of the working class and restore the position of U.S. capitalism in the world capitalist economy. It was also intertwined with a wider offensive against broad sections of the American people, beginning with the racially and nationally oppressed.

A primary aim of monopoly's assault was the destruction of the trade union movement. The U.S. ruling circles know full well that the organized sections of the working class remain the main producers of surplus value and the main bulwark of the fightback movement.

In the early 80's, to bolster their attack on the unions, monopoly introduced new, more aggressive tactics. After PATCO the hiring of scabs to replace strikers became routine. The successful negotiation of a first contract became an arena of pitched battle between the company and the union. Improvements in wages and benefits became a battleground for fierce class struggles even in the recovery phase of the economic cycle. Federal agencies, like OSHA and NLRB, once designed to protect workers' rights, became instruments to destroy them. Child labor, a shameful page in our history, came back with a vengeance.

Most of the income and employment gains of African Americans and other racially and nationally oppressed was undone in the space of a few years. The steady improvement in living standards from one generation to the next, long considered to be a permanent fixture of U.S. capitalism, has become far less certain.

Despite this many-sided assault the labor movement was not destroyed. More than that it fought back and new militant trends emerged in the working class movement, making the notion of declining class struggle a hard sell for even the most clever snake oil ideologists of the ruling class.

Is there any better evidence of this fact than the Solidarity Day march in Washington on Labor Day of this year? The march was militant and mass in character. 325,000 workers, their families and their allies participated. The marchers were brimming with determination and optimism. They were multi-racial and multi-national, male and female, and young and old. It also demonstrated labor's ability to activate and unify broad sections of the people's movement. More than 100 organizations joined with labor in sponsoring the march.

As in the past, our main point of reference must continue to be the multi-racial, multi-national, male-female, younger and older working class and the struggles in which it is engaged. Such a focus broadens our vision and enables us to move greater masses of people into struggle.

The working class now numbers over 100 million and is expected to grow to 140 million by the year 2000. Because of its size, diversity, and strategic position in the center of the U.S. economy, it has no objective stake in capitalism.

It is also the only class which has the capacity to successfully confront monopoly power. No other class or strata has that capacity. Indeed, it is a pipe dream to think that a successful counter-offensive against the Bush administration and corporate America can be mounted without the working class playing its unique role at the heart of an antimonopoly coalition.

Despite heroic struggles on the picket line and in the legislative/political action arena, the living standards of the working class have deteriorated over the past two decades. Even the many women entering the workforce to maintain family incomes has not stemmed the decline for the majority of working class families.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN WORKERS** ▣ The long term decline in the quality of life of workers affects African American workers and other racially and nationally oppressed workers the hardest. As the overall quality of life declines for the majority of the working class, the sharpest decline occurs in the African American community.

By every category measuring economic well-being — unemployment, income, housing, homelessness, education, infant mortality rates, health care, nutrition, etc., African American workers are worse off. But more than that the income, wage, employment, health care, life expectancy gap is growing. This unequal decline in living conditions of African American workers is the direct result of racism.

Racism has been the operative policy of the White House and the Supreme Court for the past 11 years. Since Reagan entered the Oval Office in 1981, the full weight of the federal government has been directed toward eliminating every piece of civil rights legislation of the past half century and scuttling affirmative action programs in the workplace.

The election of Bush in 1988 has not altered that policy. The racist statements and policies of the Bush administration have taken on more extreme forms and embold-

ened the Jesse Helms and David Dukes of our land.

The racist code words of Bush, Helms, and Duke are programed to destroy the emerging consensus on civil rights and against racism. They are aimed at the growing class consciousness and class unity evident on picket lines and in marches. They are designed to deliver a powerful body blow to Black, Brown, and white unity.

This new racist offensive blames the victim, immobilizes and confuses white people, and covers up the monopoly roots of the economic crisis, exploitation, and racism.

In periods of economic decline it is necessary to come up with more basic arguments for equality. We have to show that the roots of racism lie within the exploitative relations of capitalism. We have to find ways to convince white workers that they have no objective stake in racism. We have to argue that the struggle for equality is a prerequisite for class and all-peoples unity. We have to show the longer range benefits of class unity.

**WOMEN WORKERS** ▣ The fastest growing section of the working class over the past decade has been women workers. They now make up over 45 percent of the working class. And their numbers are projected to grow in absolute and relative terms.

The entrance of women into the workplace, however, has not lessened the discrimination and harassment which they encounter on the job. In 1988 women working full time earned only 65 cents to every dollar earned by men. On average they earned slightly over \$17,000 per year. Nearly half brought home less than \$10,000 annually.

Women are kept out of better paying occupations. Instead they are channeled into lower wage jobs with few benefits, and seldom have union protection. The majority of part-time workers are women. When women workers are able to break into non-traditional occupations, they often earn less than their male counterparts in the same occupations.

Racially and nationally oppressed women shoulder additional discrimination. They are found overwhelmingly in lower pay categories. They are unemployed at rates more than twice that of white women. A greater proportion of them are single heads of families. And many are among the working poor, a category which continues to grow.

Both the women's movement and the labor movement have responsibility to struggle for the special needs of racially and nationally oppressed women. White workers and women have a special responsibility in this regard.

The entry of women into the work place is a most positive development. In recent years women workers have played an important role in many workplace struggles. Women were prominent in strikes of teachers, hospital workers, airline workers to name a few. It was African American women who organized and led the the Delta Pride strike.

Outside of the workplace, women workers are deeply involved in electoral campaigns, where they tend to support and vote for progressive candidates. They are also the bedrock of struggles in the community and the schools.

All of this argues for a stepped up struggle to eliminate women's inequality in the workplace and society. The special oppression of women workers is a source of superprofits for the monopolies and division within the working-class and people's movement.

**MEXICAN AMERICAN WORKERS** ■ Mexican American workers represent a growing section of the working class. As a result of demographic changes they and other Latino workers are decisive in many areas of the country. This is especially true in the Southwest region of the country stretching from Texas to Southern California.

Like other racially and nationally oppressed workers, Mexican Americans experience discrimination in the workplace and community. They earn less, are more likely to work part-time, and are employed in sweat shops which have sprung up in the Southwest region of the country. They are a source of corporate superprofits.

Mexican American workers have added to the "fresh winds" in the trade union movement. In the teacher's strike in Los Angeles, for example, Mexican American workers were instrumental in unifying the teachers, winning solidarity support from the rest of labor, and bringing the full weight of the Mexican American community to bear on the strike and its successful outcome.

It is because of this that the Bush administration and monopoly capital are actively trying to pit Mexican American and other Latino workers against other sections of the working class. This is the aim of "English Only" and the crude racist stereotypes of Latino people promoted by mass media.

**IMMIGRANT WORKERS** ■ Immigrant workers are another growing segment of our working class. Because of the deepening economic crisis in the Third World, the influx of immigrants to our country has increased dramatically over the past decade. Some came to escape from political repression but most come because of the global crisis of world capitalism.

More recently, immigrant workers are coming from the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This is especially the case in Western Europe where the extreme right and fascist elements are trying to exploit the situation.

Between now and the year 2000 immigrants are projected to enter the working class at a rate of more than 20 percent. In some regions of the country their share in the working class will grow at a faster pace.

Most immigrant workers are channeled into low-paying jobs with no union protection. They are the victims of forms of exploitation which were typical of the 19th century. Their children are forced into sweatshops.

They bring to the labor movement their traditions of

struggle from the countries which they left. Like the immigrants who were such an important part of the organizing drives of the 30's, we can expect immigrant workers will play a key role in today's struggles.

It is imperative that the labor movement call for the repeal of the employee sanctions bill, and at the same time demand full economic, political, and social rights for immigrant workers. Also, the labor movement needs to continue to step up its struggle to organize immigrant workers. This can't be done without taking into account their traditions, culture, and language. We should make our Party a welcome home for them.

**CHANGING COMPOSITION OF WORKING CLASS** ■ The entrance of these workers into the workplace is changing the composition of the working class. These changes are propelled by the changing structure of the U.S. and world capitalist economy.

What are we to make of this development? First of all, the changing composition of the working class does not alter its role in society. The changes that take place within the ranks of the working class are important but they do not change the basic class status of workers. How dirty one's hands get while working or the color of one's shirt are not factors that determine class status. They are signs of one's trade or skill. New technology has brought about some very important changes of this nature.

But these changes have not altered the basic character of the working class. It remains an exploited class and the only — and I mean only — inherently revolutionary force in society.

These changes add numerically to the size of the working class, confirming the observation of the Communist Manifesto that capitalist society is more and more splitting up into two hostile camps.

They also make the working class more reflective of the nation's population and strengthen its links to its natural allies — the racially and nationally oppressed and women. They bring into the working-class movement people who come from rich, militant and progressive political and cultural traditions. They bring new skills into the working-class movement.

The Bush administration, the corporations, and the ultra-right cynically attempt to exploit the changes in the working class. This is especially so now that the country is in the middle of an economic crisis and the early preparations for the 1992 elections. What better way to weaken a unified fightback in the economic and political arena? Given this situation, the struggle for equality and class unity takes on new significance.

**THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT** ■ Many of the positive developments in labor continue to develop and gain strength in the 90's.

Workers are more militant, determined, experienced, and confident. Unlike the early 80's when wholesale concessions and retreat were on the agenda, workers are resisting the corporate-government gangup. And in a



growing number of struggles doing it successfully.

New forms of struggle are also seeing the light of day in labor's ranks. Corporate campaigns, mass violations of injunctions, civil disobedience, cooperative bargaining and organizing, are becoming more common forms of struggle. In Los Angeles, for example, the Service Employees International Union launched its "Days of Rolling Thunder" campaign. Workers at different work-sites which make up the bargaining unit are walking out on different days. And this will continue until a contract is signed.

Labor is also carving out new independent tactics in the political arena. Among many union members and leaders there is a general negative feeling and even anger toward the Democratic Party.

Without question this sentiment is stimulating new innovative steps in the electoral and legislative fields by the trade unions. It's behind labor's decision to set up its own independent electoral structure. It explains labor's readiness to field and elect candidates from its own ranks. With the election of Lucien Blackwell, a former longshore worker and union leader in Philadelphia in the recent elections, there will be two workers in the Congress.

The growing anger with the Democratic Party is also the political soil out of which Labor Party Advocates is growing. This new organization is getting an enthusiastic reception from workers around the country.

We must get up to our necks in helping to build this important organization. Both practically and politically, we have much which we can contribute.

The relations between labor and its allies have broadened and deepened during the period since our last convention. Of special significance is the maturing of the labor-African American alliance.

As positive as these trends are, they are not yet dominant, nor are they uniform. There is, for example, a right wing grouped around AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and the International Department of the AFL-CIO, which hampers and misleads the labor movement. Its policy is class collaboration and anti-communism.

Despite Kirkland's role, the militant trends in labor continue to develop and give leadership to struggles against the corporations and the Bush administration. In fact, they are strong enough in some cases to force the right wing gathered around Kirkland and the AFL-CIO's International Department to respond to pressures from below.

A key task is to find the ways to consolidate and strengthen these trends to the point where they become dominant in the working class. Fine speeches, while necessary, are not enough. Also necessary are issues, forms of organization, and concrete initiatives which will move broader sections of the labor movement into struggle.

**RACISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY** ■ Our Party has long understood and practiced the inseparability of the class struggle and the struggle for equality. We pioneered in the creative application of our Marxist-Leninist

science to the national question here in the United States. We must not lose sight of this tremendous contribution nor degrade it.

While others were looking for the reasons for slavery and inequality by examining the "nature of man," our Party understood that the brutal system of chattel slavery was linked to the basic development of U.S. capitalism. That anti-slavery was not only morally right, but critical to social progress and the advance of the U.S. working class. That building the U.S. labor movement, organizing especially mass production industries, required a struggle against racism, the unity of Black and white, which was the strategic basis for multiracial working class unity. This was a most important feature of the organization of the basic industries.

**RACISM AND CLASS OPPRESSION** ■ Our contribution has been based on the notion that while the organized systems of racist oppression are man-made, it is necessary to understand what kind of people created it. It is the creation of the capitalists, not the workers. For the benefit of the capitalist, not the workers.

Racism is structured and institutionalized into the system of class oppression. It is a system of exploitation, oppression, discrimination and segregation based on race and nationality. The African American people are all victims of racism, of national oppression. And those who are workers are also victims of class exploitation.

Racism is a system of oppression in employment, housing, education, medical care, culture and in the political arena.

The criminalization of African American young males best demonstrates the new face of racism. They are victims of extreme levels of imprisonment, police violence and murder, high unemployment, homelessness, illiteracy and disease. More than 25 percent of them are either in prison, on parole, probation, or in some way under the control of the criminal justice system.

To this must be added the triple oppression of Black women, as racially oppressed, as women and as working women. The multiple crises, especially in jobs, housing, education, health and child care have triple impact on African American women and their families.

Racism is integral to U.S. policies of aggression and exploitation abroad. Therefore, class struggle and class unity are integral to the fight against U.S. imperialism.

Racism is in the very bone marrow of U.S. capitalism. Capitalism generates the racism virus in society. It will promote it and thrive on it as long as racism generates superexploitation and therefore superprofits. As long as it is a surefire way to promote class collaboration in the form of pitting worker against worker, U.S. capitalism will not end the system of racist oppression.

Racism is inherent in the nature of the system, not in the nature of human beings. If it was created by humans then it can be eliminated by human beings. We Communists, with understanding and confidence in the people, over the years have consistently fought for win-

ning our class as a whole in the fight against racial oppression.

In the last February issue of Political Affairs, our late comrade Thomas Dennis, along with comrade Tony Monteiro, coauthored an excellent article on institutionalized racism. It states,

"Racial oppression exists not as a thing in itself, or even a thing for itself, but to produce extra profits for the largest monopoly corporations. It is inseparable from the drive to produce maximum profits. All workers, irrespective of race and nationality, therefore have an objective interest in the struggle against racism. At the same time the vast majority of peoples of color are workers of hand or brain. Their oppression is shaped by the system of exploitation, while at the same time deepening the system that exploits all workers."

This is why the class struggle and the struggle for equality and against racism, while distinct entities, are inseparable.

Like all negative ideological currents, without struggle racism grows and spreads. The struggle must be conducted in all phases of life for equality in the economic field, in housing and education. It must be fought in the areas of ethics and morality. It is a struggle for equality in all phases of life.

**NATIONAL OPPRESSION** ■ Anti-Chicano/Mexican American chauvinism is related to racism. But it has its own distinct features based on bigotry and a specific set of prejudices. The chauvinism directed against Puerto Ricans, Native American Indians, Asian Pacific, Korean and the peoples of the Caribbean Islands also has its own set of specific characteristics and prejudices.

This chauvinism affects the jobs market, housing and education. There are millions of racially and nationally oppressed people who have no health or medical insurance.

Racism and chauvinism are expressed as slander, vilification, stereotyping and falsehoods. The aim of this ideological attack is to create and sustain a second-class, lower-paid citizen status.

The ideology of racism and chauvinism permeates every area of life under capitalism. It is filtered through the mass media, movies, literature, magazines, advertising, speeches, etc. It is openly expressed and advocated by the ultra-right fascist forces. It is a frequent and ugly presence in corporate offices, in the halls of Congress, in city, county and state governments. This all-sided barrage of racism therefore produces racist influences in the ranks of the middle classes and professionals, as well as among workers.

**STRUGGLES IN THE PARTY** ■ Unfortunately, there are also influences of racism in the ranks of the Communist Party. It is not open, but it is present. Whenever and wherever there is an attitude that the struggle against racism is not as important anymore, in such situations racism penetrates the Party.

Within the Party it shows up as a lack of concern and insensitivity. It shows up as a lack of, or a slow response to expressions that reflect influences of white chauvinism. It is exhibited in lack of initiative, a low level of militancy in the struggle against racism.

It is important for Communists to understand that racism and chauvinism of any kind is a reflection of the enemy ideology of capitalism. No matter the expression, it demonstrates the penetration of capitalist class ideology in our ranks.

The Party, but in the first place the Party's leadership, must raise the struggle against racism and chauvinism to a higher level. The struggle cannot be a once-in-a-while question. It must be consistent, planned and organized.

For Communists it is not enough to formally reject racism because it is morally wrong. Our understanding and commitment has to be deeper than that.

Sensitivity to the influences of racism should be a part of our very being. It should be developed into a natural response, rooted in our ideological, political and cultural makeup, where there is no room for racist prejudice.

**THE CRISIS AND THE ELECTORAL ARENA** ■ The crisis situation has become the backdrop for the 1992 presidential elections. The freefall in the economy is reflected in the freefall in Bush's standing in the polls. The latest nationwide New York Times/CBS News poll shows a "striking loss of confidence in Bush's economic leadership." It shows that "only one American in four now approves of Bush's handling of the economy, a level of discontent unmatched since the Carter presidency."

Citing "economic pessimism" as the front and center issue, this poll shows a public "frustrated and angry." Bush's rating on the economy dropped to 25 percent, lower than any reading taken during the Reagan administration. When asked to rate the condition of the economy, 74 percent said it was "very bad."

Along with the economy, Bush's popularity has gone into a "free fall." Nevertheless, Bush and his White House team continue to sound more and more like Herbert Hoover did in the crisis of the 30's.

Bush does not react to the polls or the economic crisis. He does not seem to think that it is necessary to take emergency measures. He says that everything is okay. That's what Herbert Hoover did.

**INDEPENDENCE — THE ONLY WAY** ■ There is no way out of the nation's current economic, social and political crisis without a fully developed strategy of independent political action, including the fielding of candidates and the mobilization of the masses around a progressive legislative agenda. Without the politically independent forces, the elections will be a lot of hot air, a lot of do-nothing demagoguery by both Republicans and Democrats.

For any meaningful program that will meet the challenge of the economic crisis, candidates will have to cross over the class line, because any real solution will have to take the money from where it's at. So far most of the can-

didates have shown no inclination to cross that class line. So far they remain within the confines of the two parties of monopoly capital.

Instead of proposing policies to take the money from where it's at, most proposals include tax breaks for the rich. Bush's latest is to cut taxes by reducing the capital gains tax on the corporate rich. That is, to put more money where it's already at. A perfect Republican example is the Gingrich-Bush proposal to give 70 percent of the tax breaks to those making over \$100,000 and 57 percent of that break to those making over \$200,000.

The administration is trying to convince people that Bush is invincible in 1992. And many in the Democratic Party top circles seem to believe this is so. They are leaderless and without a coherent program, oftentimes accepting Bush's premises before the debate even begins.

There are two kinds of lessons from two very important recent elections. There is one kind in the Duke campaign and another in the Pennsylvania senate race of Harris Wofford.

**DUKE, DOWN BUT DEADLY** ▫ The Duke campaign used a combination of the economic crisis and racism. The interconnection of these issues is where right-wing politics is moving and it will be part of the presidential elections. Therefore, the Duke campaign should be seen as a danger signal. The ingredients of similar kinds of campaigns are present in many states.

Besides the huge campaign donations from around the country and the free direct mailing appeals that the Liberty Lobby did to 100,000 ultra-rightists, Duke got over \$10 million worth of free publicity and media exposure. This was the bulk of Duke's support base for his campaign.

Duke had to run against his past as the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and his record as a Hitler-loving, neo-Nazi, fascist stormtrooper, who gave speeches about a fascist takeover of the United States while he was in the state legislature. He sold copies of Mein Kampf and other Nazi, anti-semitic garbage out of his legislative office. He became an ideological guru, planning strategy and tactics aimed at making Nazism palatable to the American people.

At the heart of this strategy was the tactic of turning reality on its head. Had Duke donned his Klan hood and waved Mein Kampf at election rallies he would have been dismissed as a lunatic. But in his newly adopted guise as a populist conservative Republican he was mouthing sentiments virtually indistinguishable from other conservative politicians, including Bush.

At every Duke rally he ranted, "unlike our opponents we are not racists. We believe in equal justice for everyone." These are the codewords that tell people that whites are being victimized by Black welfare recipients, criminals and those who benefit from affirmative action, which he calls "reverse racism."

He never missed an opportunity to remind his audience that his positions on domestic and foreign policy are

identical to those espoused by George Bush. Then he blasted Bush for signing the "civil wrongs" act. He promised to nullify all affirmative action programs in Louisiana if elected. Right after that, George Bush's staff drafted an executive order to cancel all affirmative action programs in the federal government. Duke sponsored legislation to promote the sterilization of women on welfare.

It was the demagoguery of race politics coupled with his use of the effects of the economic crisis that made Duke effective with white voters in Louisiana. And it was effective because the Democratic candidate, although he warned that Louisiana would be abandoned by business and tourism, never offered white voters, and especially workers, an economic program that would solve the serious economic crises of the Louisiana workers. He never talked about the economic issues. It is important to keep in mind that in a class breakdown of votes, those workers making under \$15,000 voted 75 percent in favor of Edwards. It was not a pro-Edwards vote. It was an anti-Duke vote.

**THE STOP DUKE MOVEMENT** ▫ The Duke menace makes all the more important the lessons of how the "Stop Duke" movement in Louisiana achieved its victory. It was a victory for grassroots coalition politics, spearheaded by the African American community. When Duke unexpectedly came in second in the October primary, within hours the campaign to defeat Duke was organized, starting with an emergency voter registration drive that added 35,000 voters to the rolls.

The Louisiana Coalition Against Racism and Nazism, an interracial group, played a tremendous role in the anti-Duke campaign. Together with labor, they unleashed a statewide campaign of ads, direct mailings and door-to-door leafletting to expose Duke's Klan and Nazi ties.

This coalition became an all-people's united front against Duke. Keeping in mind that Louisiana is a "right to work state," the AFL-CIO sent in forces and finances and the Louisiana unions like the American Federation of Teachers, the United Food and Commercial Workers, Operating Engineers and others worked tirelessly on mailings to trade unionists, leafletting and telephone banks to organize and get out the vote.

The 78 percent voter turnout was a near record. The Black turnout was 80 percent, two percent higher than the white vote, a first in the state's history. Of these, 96 percent voted for Edwards, zero for Duke. The Black voters are 27 percent of the electorate. As a result of the anti-Duke mobilization the Black caucus of the Louisiana Legislature leaped from 24 to 32 members.

The landslide against Duke was clearly a "Stop Duke" vote since Edwards was widely considered a sorry alternative, a three-time former governor, twice indicted for corruption, who presided over the slide of Louisiana into an economic crisis.

Two days after the election, Duke announced he has set up a committee to explore the possibility of running for President. Duke and the fascist forces around him

clearly have a long-term perspective and are not daunted by short-term setbacks.

What we are now facing is a fascist menace in electoral politics. Duke now has more name recognition than any of the Democratic candidates running against Bush in 1992. We now have to face the fact that an avowed Nazi Ku Klux Klansman is seriously contending for the presidency of the U.S. Multiply the 700,000 white Duke votes by 50 states and D.C. and you can see we are talking about many millions under the influence of racism and right-wing extremism.

The Duke vote is a clear example of what can happen when white working people, beset by their economic woes, are not presented with a clear alternative program to meet their needs and a clear stand against racism.

There is no question the stage is set for the Dukes of this country to make their bid for power.

Bush's campaign against "quotas," his waffling back and forth before he signed the watered-down Civil Rights Act and his threat, later withdrawn, to in effect wipe out 25 years of affirmative action, shows that he is maneuvering to see how far he can go and which way the wind is blowing on the "Duke message."

The Duke campaign is a warning that reaction will use raw racism and the economic crisis as main campaign strategies wherever and whenever they see the opening.

**THE WOFFORD VICTORY** ■ The Senate race in Pennsylvania was an opposite experience. The main mass base for Harris Wofford's campaign was trade unionists, Black, Brown and white.

Harris Wofford, a long time supporter of civil rights, was elected because his positions on the economy, on health care and other issues addressed the major concerns of working people. And he took a clearly anti-racist, pro-labor stand.

In many ways, Wofford became an independent candidate. He crossed that class line. His campaign proposed programs on health care, unemployment and tax relief for working people. The key ingredient in his victory were the forces of political independence.

In Pittsburgh, and in many working class districts, the union halls were Wofford campaign headquarters. In many areas the Steelworkers and other unions called the shots and organized the campaign. As one comrade who played a leading role in the independent side of the Wofford campaign put it, "If we had cast our lot with the Democratic Party then we would have spent a boring election night with a tiny group of hacks in a fancy hotel. Instead we were a happy Black, Brown and white crowd celebrating our victory at the union hall. It was a much better party."

The defeat of Thornburgh, who had the full support of Bush and the Republican Party, was a signal defeat for the Reagan-Bush policies of the last ten years.

Clearly, the lesson here is that if a candidate crosses the class line, if he or she takes a strong anti-racist, pro-civil rights, pro-labor position, has a good platform on

key economic issues and builds an independent base mainly in the trade union and African American community, such a campaign can win.

**CROSSING THAT CLASS LINE** ■ Thus, among the many other crises, there is a political crisis of the two-party system. They do not and cannot meet the challenge of the economic crisis in unemployment, health care, housing, education, etc., because so far the great majority of candidates have not crossed that all-important class line. Across that line are the broad all-people's forces, who will join forces with labor and the nationally and racially oppressed.

Now there is a political vacuum that only the forces of independence can fill. Because of the crisis situation, the popular sentiment organized into forces of political independence have become indispensable for any victories against reaction. In order to defeat Bush, the support of political independents is an absolute necessity for any candidate. And this support will help ensure that a progressive candidate promotes an independent platform and remains on course after election.

The role and influence of political independence within the Democratic Party will be very limited without a relationship to the independent forces outside of the two parties. In fact, the degree of influence within the Democratic Party is measured by the support and influence one has with the independent forces outside the party.

Using the Democratic Party's electoral apparatus to run for office is one thing. But to see the Democratic Party as a vehicle for progress and even as a necessary factor on the path to socialism is to live in a make-believe world.

There is no clear left wing in the Democratic Party. There are progressive and left forces among the movements that work with and use the Democratic electoral system. This does not change the fact that the Democratic Party is an instrument of monopoly capital. It is possible to use the electoral apparatus only if there is an independent political base.

However, the decisive question is not whether the struggle is inside or outside the Democratic Party. The fight is escalating in both arenas and must be intensified. Those struggles must be guided by a strategic line that places the primary stress on organizational independence — chapters of the Rainbow Coalition, the labor movement's political action committees, the Labor Advocates group, community organizations and coalitions, peace organizations, etc. It also means grooming candidates from the ranks of labor, from the African American and other minority communities, more women, youth and peace candidates. Wherever possible, candidates who are outright independents, challenging the policies of both parties, must be supported.

**NEW, MASS PEOPLES PARTY** ■ There is a growing new element among the independent forces. It is the emergence of the movements that are pushing for a new mass

people's political party. What is new is the fact that the impetus and initiative of this movement is mainly in the ranks of the workers and trade unions. Recruiting into The Labor Advocates movement continues. It is successful way beyond expectations. The discussion and probing by the forces around the Rainbow and Jesse Jackson's role continues. There are conferences taking place around the question of a new party organized by the National Organization of Women.

The Cleveland Citizen is a one hundred year old newspaper, which expresses the views and is supported by the trade union movement. The paper recently conducted a poll of its readers on the question of a new labor-based party. The editor was surprised that the poll showed 100 percent support for a new party. This is further proof that the sentiment and support for a new party has continued to grow in the ranks of workers and the racially and nationally oppressed.

There is a lot of talk lately about "new thinking." It seems to me that we need to update our thinking on the question of the role and influence of the forces and forms of political independence. One of the old ideas we need to drop is that there is a contradiction between building political independence and working with such forces within the Democratic Party.

In order to win reforms — to win legislative victories such as civil rights legislation, health care bills, extended unemployment benefits, education programs, anti-scab and other pro-labor laws like family and medical leave, tax relief as well as economic conversion and cuts in the military budget — we will have to elect politically independent candidates to Congress, especially labor and African-American candidates.

**THE WORLD SCENE** ■ The world is a different place today because anti-socialist and counterrevolutionary waves swept many parts of the world — from Budapest to Moscow and everywhere between. It is a tragic fact of history that these anti-socialist waves did not meet any organized resistance in most of these countries and that the Communist Parties simply collapsed.

It is important to note here that the anti-socialist wave did not succeed in all the socialist countries — not in China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. In these countries the counterrevolutionary tide was turned back.

In these countries the working people are continuing to build socialism under very difficult circumstances. Each of these countries is continuing to build socialism according to their specific circumstances and history.

Of course the setbacks have negatively affected their development. But they are all making the necessary adjustments, especially Cuba, where there is total mobilization of people and resources. Emergency plans to defend and preserve Cuban socialism have been in place for years.

The Soviet Union is no longer the support base for the smaller socialist countries and the countries in the Third World. The Soviet Union is no longer the same kind of

counterforce to world imperialism as it was in the past. This makes the world a different, more dangerous, less peaceful place. The shock waves are still reverberating around the world. Because of this loss, the smaller countries are forced to make concessions, as is the case in Afghanistan, Angola and Ethiopia.

This fact has forced countries like Cuba and Vietnam to take necessary measures to protect their socialist system. Those who are predicting the fall of Cuban socialism, or who are advising Fidel to accommodate in any way, will have to wait a long time, most likely forever.

The new arrogance and brutality of U.S. imperialism is the turning of the Guantanamo Naval base into refugee camps for Haitians as a way-station on Cuban soil. It is a glaring example of the "new world order" concept, in which the United States thinks it can treat people as it wishes, without regard to consequences of its actions.

The world is also different because the cold war has receded into the background. The cold war served as the glue that kept the major capitalist countries together. Because the glue has worn off, inner-imperialist contradictions, self-interest centrifugal forces are taking over.

Although the cold war is receding, the military buildup in the United States continues unabated. The United States is developing and launching ever more sophisticated spy satellites and new, more accurate long range missiles.

One of the newer satellites just returned from a ten day test run after launching a most sophisticated \$300 million dollar spy satellite. The Republicans in Congress support the President's military program and the Democrats are only cutting the military budget very slightly, and only in production of outdated and worthless military equipment.

It has been a period of monopoly capital in the raw. The brazen arrogance of the right-wing forces has increased as a result of the Gulf War.

The Bush Administration's pursuit of a foreign policy based on armed might remains its method of choice to dominate the world. It is used not only for military aggression, but to threaten and intimidate other countries.

**BUSH'S NEW WORLD ORDER** ■ It has adapted the new slogan, "new world order," to its evil purposes. Bush and Baker's concept of a "new world order" includes the idea that there is now only one "superpower." It includes order through Stealth terrorism, order through big power bullyism and bribery, order through the barrel of a gun.

It uses a false concept of "new world order" to hide its aggression and its designs for U.S. world domination. It now includes the awesome power of the largest military force and most sophisticated computerized Smart bomb technology. Bush's vision of the "new world order" concept means that the U.S. will enforce its imperialist morality on the world through military "might makes right."

I do not think we have yet fully comprehended the new danger that comes from the "new world order" con-

cept that sees the U.S. as "the only superpower." I do not think we fully understand the danger U.S. imperialism poses to countries like Cuba, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, the armed struggles going on in Yugoslavia add an additional dimension to the setbacks. And of course there have been new threats by the Bush Administration against North Korea, Libya and Iraq. These are some of the new developments we have to deal with.

However, we must not limit our view to the negatives on the world scene. This would be shortsighted. The struggles in South Africa are more in keeping with what the future struggles will be like.

**RALLYING CRY OF DEMOCRACY** ■ Worldwide, this has been a period of turmoil, distinguished by the rallying cry of "democracy." This slogan has become a material force for change and has been used for both positive and negative purposes. A popular demand for greater democracy swept through many countries, both capitalist and socialist.

Democracy has long been the battle cry of the world forces of anti-imperialism and national liberation.

In the socialist countries, the slogan was adapted to serve the struggles for a more democratic socialism. There is confusion because both the pro- and anti-socialist forces use it.

Democracy became the main rallying cry for the forces fighting to overturn reactionary, racist, militaristic regimes in South Africa, Haiti, Chile and El Salvador.

In South Africa, the concepts and movements for "land, equality and democracy" are step-by-step tearing down the edifice of apartheid, the most deeply entrenched reactionary, racist capitalist regime in the world.

In the United States, the struggles for civil rights, trade union rights, political empowerment and many other civil and human rights reached a new level in the 80's.

On the other hand, there are forces who have been able to adapt the freedom and democracy slogans to fit their reactionary purposes.

U.S. imperialism demagogically used the slogan for its policies of aggression. It adapted the slogan to serve as a cover for its support and funding of cutthroat contra gangs the world over.

U.S. imperialism used it to camouflage its efforts to weaken and destroy world socialism. In the name of freedom and democracy, it is working hand-in-hand with Yeltsin and Gorbachev to dismember the USSR. In the name of democracy it supports the anti-socialist, reactionary nationalist forces in the Baltic Republics. It is presiding over the republic-by-republic dismemberment of the Soviet Union.

Reading the handwriting on the Kremlin wall, Bush has now decided that Gorbachev is no longer useful, and has decided to switch support away from the center and to the republics.

For example, even before the referendum in the Ukraine, Bush announced his decision to recognize the Ukraine as a separate nation. It is clear, the U.S. thinks that support for Gorbachev is no longer the best road to destroy socialism, and has switched its support to Yeltsin and the separate republics, who now hold most of the cards.

Behind the slogan, "freedom and democracy," the U.S. continues to push the socialist countries and especially the Soviet Union onto a path of no return to capitalism.

The support and funding of the contra gangs, the aggression against Nicaragua and Afghanistan, the invasions of Panama and Grenada, the continuing manipulations of the Middle East crisis, all are carried out under the umbrella of "democracy."

There are so-called democracies that are anything but democratic. Just as there is change that is not really change. The old structures and forms of imperialism have largely disappeared, even though some remain, such as NATO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Nonetheless, imperialism remains an active, powerful and extremely reactionary and dangerous force in the world. Its tactics have changed. But if anything, U.S. imperialism, unchallenged and uncontrolled by any counterforce, is more aggressive and militaristic, more racist, more warlike and more arrogant than ever.

Bush's speeches about the 'new world order' dominated by U.S. monopoly capital, speak about making the next two centuries, "American centuries." He uses phrases like, "What we say goes," and "We have the means to enforce our concepts," and "We are the only superpower left on earth." This presents a new danger to the world, to the Third World countries and to the socialist countries.

In addition to the old-style imperialist aggression, new forms of more indirect imperialist enslavement are in place, such as oppression by way of a bottomless indebtedness in which payments on new loans cannot even cover the interest on the old. This is a financial chokehold by the imperialist banks on the Third World countries, as well as increasingly on some socialist countries. And there is the imperialist policy of organizing and funding right-wing nationalist gangs in Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan.

World capitalist relationships have also changed. But capitalism has not. Japan, and now a united capitalist Germany, have become bigger world powers. The United States, England and France have been forced to make room for the new thugs on the block.

The world capitalist economy is increasingly global. The transnational corporations have grown fat during this period. Capital is more mobile and world markets are more integrated. But capitalism remains state monopoly capitalism.

In the Gulf War, the invasion and occupation of Kuwait was unjust. But the Bush Administration used it to mobilize support for its plans to subjugate Iraq and

take over its oil resources. In the name of "saving the Mideast from Saddam Hussein," 250,000 lives were needlessly lost, cities and towns destroyed and the environment devastated for years to come.

The shift in the fortunes of U.S. monopoly capital is evident in the fact that within a ten year period the United States has fallen from the heights of the biggest, most powerful creditor nation to being the biggest debtor nation in the world. Foreign banks own big chunks of U.S. real estate, corporations and government bonds.

Yet the transnationals did quite well in the 80's despite the economic decline of the U.S. as a world economic power. The auto companies alone reported over \$50 billion in profits. The total debt, federal, state, corporate and consumer is now over \$11 trillion dollars. The escalating interest payments on this debt is the Achilles heel of the U.S. economy.

In the sweep of history, U.S. imperialism will not be able to recapture its former status. It has reached its apex and is on the descent. Capitalism will continue to have its ups and downs, but it is on the declining side of history.

**HOW CAPITALISM SURVIVES** ■ Capitalism survives by borrowing on the future. It survives by increasing the rate of exploitation. It survives by increasing the racist component of exploitation. It survives by expropriating most of the benefits from new technology. It survives by exploiting the underdeveloped countries and by making the whole world part of its "vital economic interests."

Capitalism survives, but in the process digs its own hole deeper and wider. Its fight for survival means that survival for the working class and people becomes increasingly more difficult as the overall standard of living declines and their choices keep narrowing. Thus, the class contradiction deepens and the class struggle sharpens. This is an inevitable process.

The systemic flaws in capitalism are not going to disappear. In fact, they will sharpen. In the sweep of history, the setbacks and even the defeats in the socialist countries are temporary. They do not signal the end of socialism or the Communist Parties. The direction of history in the making continues to move in a progressive direction. The setbacks have not changed this. Socialism is an inevitable stage on the path of advancing civilization.

**THE SOVIET UNION** ■ At this point it seems to me we should not have to argue some questions about the Soviet Union. Are the policies followed by the Gorbachev-Yeltsin group destructive of socialism? The answer is all too obvious.

The logical extension of Gorbachev's "new thinking" are the actions he took after the attempted coup. He collaborated with Yeltsin in outlawing the CPSU, padlocking Party offices and buildings, silenced the several Party newspapers, confiscated Party property, files and records. He illegally dismissed the Central Committee and Secretariat and ordered confiscation of their offices; he gave open approval to the witchhunts, including the

arrest of Communists. He then resigned as General Secretary. He succeeded in disbanding the democratically elected government bodies, the Supreme Soviet and Congress of People's Deputies and wrested power from the elected government of working-class power, installed non-elected, appointed government, with emergency powers to rule by decree.

He has presided over the disintegration of the USSR through the so-called treaty and is now working to break up the socialist economic structure completely, and with it the political and ideological structure. The anti-socialist, pro-capitalist forces have gained the upper hand. The economy is free falling, inflation is rampant, the underground economy is operating in full swing. An entrepreneurial class is growing with all the corrupt and criminal elements this brings forth. The Soviet working class is staring into the future of a winter of unemployment, scarcity and inflation, now running at about 50 percent a month.

It is little wonder that some Yeltsin policies remind you of some Reagan/Bush policies. The latest issue of The Nation exposes why. They all share some of the same advisors. Yeltsin has a long-term contract with the notorious right-wing Hoover Institute.

As the Nation put it, "The Hoover advice is simple: Russia should go 'cold turkey' and move to capitalism without much central coordination or Western financial aid. It should privatize industry promptly and eliminate the state from as many activities as possible." And Yeltsin pays for this advice.

**COMMUNIST REGROUPING** ■ But there is ample evidence that the Communists in the Soviet Union are regrouping. One of the best signs of the rebirth of the CP was the spontaneous mass turnout for the November 7 demonstrations. There were over 100,000 out in Moscow. While our paper had a faxed report from the Soviet Union saying that over 100,000 had turned out, in an editorial the PWW said that only 10,000 had turned out nationwide.

The Communist Party is now illegal in most parts of what used to make up the Soviet Union. All foreign Communists have now been ordered out of the country by November 15th. This included those married to Soviet citizens. There is no letup in Gorbachev's anti-Communist drive.

There are many unanswered questions relating to the new developments. Many will be discussed for a long time.

In a basic sense, the new thinking of Gorbachev is the thinking that dropped the role of the class struggle, the role of the working class, the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. This new thinking resulted in setbacks around the world. It set the stage for right opportunist trends worldwide. The new thinking is in its very essence right opportunism.

**NO SYSTEMIC FLAWS** ■ The corporate owned and sponsored mass media line is that the crisis of socialism was

inevitable because socialism cannot work and the problems are systemic. Some argue, even in our Party, that the problems are systemic in both systems, capitalism and socialism.

I have argued that the flaws in the Soviet Union are not systemic. The crisis developed as a result of serious mistakes made by the leadership. The truth is that there are no systemic flaws in the basic tenets of socialism; no flaws in the basic concept of public ownership of the means of production; no flaws in the concept of a planned economy or production for the common good. There is no basic flaw in the theories of Marxism-Leninism or dialectical materialism. You can't blame the crimes of Stalin on socialism, anymore than you can blame the mistakes of Gorbachev on socialism.

The crisis is caused by violations of the principles that socialism is based on. The crisis is caused by introducing capitalism into the structure of socialism. They don't mix. Socialism can and must be made better, more democratic, less centralized, etc.

On the other hand the crisis of capitalism is systemic. The roots of this crisis are in the private ownership and control of the means of production.

**THE PARTY** ■ A scientifically sound, balanced assessment of the Party between conventions can only be done by taking into account both the objective and subjective factors.

The basic units and rank and file of the Party remain politically and ideologically healthy. However, one of the tasks of any national convention is to do some checkup on what we have done, what we have not done and "what is to be done." Any examination of the Party has to look at the health and status of the clubs, the heart of our Party, the direct tie to the working class and people.

**OPPORTUNISM - A HISTORY LESSON** ■ During the pre-convention period there has been much discussion and debate about right opportunism and whether our Party has lost some of its militancy. When this was first raised some comrades took offense and instead of participating in a give-and-take examination of our work, they called it "slander," "labeling," and "attempting to silence dissent with name calling."

Right opportunism has a long history. It has been a constant concern of the world Communist and revolutionary movements from the beginning. Marx, Engels and Lenin spent much of their time and energy fighting and writing against such trends, both within countries and worldwide.

Right opportunistic swings in our Party usually follow a period in which the domestic scene swings to the right or goes through a period of reaction. This pressure gives rise to right opportunist tendencies — a giving in to demands coming from the capitalist class, a sacrificing of the fundamental interests of the working class and people, for momentary gains. While it ebbs and flows, it is constantly generated and is one of the strongest ideologi-

cal currents in our capitalist society.

This is especially compelling when developments in the socialist world, and especially the Soviet Union, swing to the right. How else can you describe the overall trends of the past couple of years in the Communist Party and government of the Soviet Union? How else can you characterize the setbacks and defeats in the East European socialist countries? Right opportunism is the only way of characterizing trends that move away from socialism back to capitalism and the destruction of Communist Parties.

The setbacks and defeats in the East European socialist countries and the road to ruin that the Soviet Union has been traveling is having a profound impact on the ideological and political trend toward right opportunism in our Party.

The factional firestorm has been greatly fueled by the right shift in world socialism. The factional center has used the situation to raise basic ideological questions about the class struggle, Marxism-Leninism, the role of the Communist Party and more.

**ON FACTIONALISM** ■ For some time the sprouts of factionalism have been evident in the leadership levels of our Party. For some time we ignored them, minimized them and perhaps made too many concessions in our determination to avoid confrontation and disunity. We hoped that through conciliation and concessions the situation would dissipate, even disappear.

A year or so ago, I proposed that we put more emphasis on finding the path to consensus. We have tried many ways, many times to find the way to unity through consensus. But this has not resulted in any decrease in factional activity.

On the contrary, with each swing to the right in the Soviet Union, especially by Gorbachev, the factional situation in our Party took on a new head of steam. Even as Gorbachev moved to disband the Central Committee and collaborate in the banning of the Soviet Communist Party, some comrades remained totally uncritical, rationalized and defended Gorbachev's actions.

In this period, most of us became increasingly more critical of Yakovlev and Shevardnadze, and of Gorbachev when he supported their right opportunist positions.

By now there should be no question that the policies of the Soviet Union moved continuously in a right opportunistic direction. As Gorbachev's policies moved away from socialism and towards capitalism, many of us took an even more critical stance.

Comrades who supported factional positions not only continued to support Gorbachev, but increasingly sharpened their attacks on those of us who were critical of Soviet policies. This trend was clearly expressed when not so long ago a leading member of the National Board said we should take a new look at Yeltsin and that we should not be so critical of him.

As time went by, the factional activities moved more and more outside of the Party structure. The rhetoric of



the more extreme group of factionalists became increasingly nasty, irresponsible and unaccountable to any collective or leadership body.

**THE FACTIONAL PROCESS** ■ Factionalism has developed from individuals, one-on-one, to group meetings and coffee klatches outside Party structures; to the coalescing of an alternative, opposition center of leadership, with a national factional center, complete with its own political base, its own voting block, its own platform and agenda, its own structures, its own finances and factional network.

How did this happen? During the first two years or so after our 24th convention, those in leadership who for some time have had differences about basic Party policies and the direction of our Party began to come together as a minority opposition.

After coming to the conclusion that they could not win their opposition views within the Party's collectives or by majority rule, they decided to organize a factional campaign outside the Party's structures in order to win a base in the membership.

They developed a factional mentality that sees everything factionally. They established factional relationships and loyalties that superseded and took precedence over loyalty to the Party and to the class struggle. They repeatedly bypassed, violated and rejected all Party channels, all Party collectives, Party policies and the Party's Constitution, its norms, principles of organization and norms of behavior.

Lenin, in developing the standards for a party of a new type, laid out the essential ingredients for a revolutionary party. He wrote,

"In order to succeed in carrying out its historic mission, the Party's ideological unity must be supplemented with organizational unity. The Party represents a unity that rules out the existence of any factions"

Factionalism is a negation of this principle.

In the name of "new thinking" and "change and renewal," and under the guise of "democracy" and "freedom of discussion and debate," every form of pressure and coercion has been used.

It became clear that no method was too low to use in their campaign — from disruption, provocation, gate-crashing, packing meetings, manipulation of ballots, phony dues reports and election fraud to intimidation and threats and even physical violence and political thug-gery.

Leading comrades have been subjected to chauvinism and outright acts of racism. The struggle against racism and chauvinism have become victims of factionalism. Instances of insensitivity take their toll in the Party's ability to fight racism and oppression in the mass movements, especially in New York.

As anarchy, turmoil and disruption continued, the Party and its leadership bodies became consumed with internal strife and debate. Mass work and people's move-

ments are also victims of factionalism.

Factionalism turns the Party inward. And this tendency feeds the inner-destructive force leading to implosion, or self-destruction. You can see the results of such an implosion in the total wreckage of the Canadian Party.

Destabilization and disorientation have become a factional tactic. The tactic is to keep raising questions, taking minor issues and magnifying them totally out of proportion, to keep a constant flow of questions and criticisms circulating — not to resolve them, not to collectively find solutions, but to use them to add to the factional firestorm.

For the last two years, the tactic has been to keep our leading collectives in constant turmoil and focused on internal Party matters by raising one petty and internal problem after another.

Factionalism builds on legitimate problems and weaknesses. It deals mainly with negatives, but not from the viewpoint of finding solutions and correcting weaknesses. The factional way is to emphasize and use differences to create more divisions.

The factional center has generated a constant flow of factional material, starting with private letters, to secretly produced documents and petitions, widely circulated through an underground network. These documents were never presented to collective bodies of the Party.

At every turn, at every meeting where I and others raised questions about who is circulating these documents, the answer has been only a chilling, cynical acknowledgement of their existence. Nothing more.

The majority of our Party has participated in the wide-ranging open discussion during the pre-convention period, in forums, in district membership meetings, in club educationals, club conferences and through the pages of Dialog and the PWW, as well as the panels set up to try to narrow or resolve the main areas of differences. The great majority have used the open, expanded pre-convention channels as well as the normal channels of our Party.

But the factional center has placed itself and its views above and outside the Party's collectives and into its own factional channels.

I believe that through the pre-convention process on every level, the great majority of our Party has come to the conclusion that democratic centralism, the role of the working class and class struggle, Marxism-Leninism and industrial concentration are all concepts, practices and policies they want to retain. The factionalists have failed to win over the great majority of our members to their point of view.

However, when the faction felt they had lost the majority on one issue after another, they raised another and another. They write and circulate another document, another letter, another petition.

**PARTY ELECTIONS** ■ The words and deeds of the factional center, even up to this moment, make it very difficult for the Presiding Committee to consider a unity list for the

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National Committee, especially when we know in advance that there will be factional bullet voting. The only way to prevent bullet voting is to have a high minimum. Bullet voting is undemocratic. In fact, it is destructive of democracy.

The clearest example of how low factionalism can sink was the New York State Convention and the developments before and since. The violations of Party standards and rules became the norm, not the exception. I have never seen such open, brutal racism. And the most disturbing aspect was the end result. They removed the two top leading comrades, Comrade Jarvis Tyner and Joe Sims, both members of the National Committee and National Board. No charges were presented. No criticisms were made. Just like the old Tammany Hall, they were removed. The faction set up a six-person interim leadership committee. Comrades Tyner and Sims volunteered to serve with the six, but that was rejected. The decisions were made in secret, factional meetings. The comrades were simply dismissed. The whole operation was open, raw racism. This shows that factionalism has its own inner laws that supersede all standards of Communist behavior.

An important question for us is: What are the solutions to this crisis? What should we do at this Convention?

A number of solutions to the difficult question of electing leadership at our National Convention have been suggested in discussions and by way of letters and articles.

Some say, let the process take its course. The district and state conventions have elected their delegations that reflect the viewpoints of their membership. Let them speak out at the Convention to determine the future of our Party. Let these delegates elect the new National Committee that will then elect the new leadership of our Party.

Others suggest we should try to influence this process. The intent of this suggestion is to allow the Convention Presiding Committee to work and come to an agreement on a recommended list for the National Committee, that the new National Committee elect the national leaders. That would not be a "winner take all" list.

There is also a proposal that we postpone the decision on leadership structure and instruct the new National Committee to make a deeper study and then hold its first meeting after the convention to fully examine the structure, to look into any new ideas and then mold the new leadership around that structure. This would include the election of all leading cadre, the election of the National Board, the Secretariat, the commissions and departments, the Political Executive and all officers. This would give the new National Committee an opportunity to examine and mold the new leadership without the pressure of the factional firestorm.

We need not wait till the next convention to take a new look at our situation. We could consider calling a

special conference in between.

Finally let me read some quotes from two important sources:

From Lenin,

"The Party is a voluntary association and unity is possible and useful only when people unite who are desirous and capable of carrying out a common Party policy with at least some degree of conscientiousness. Unity is impossible and harmful when it attempts to muddle and obscure the consciousness of this policy, when it attempts to bind by a fictitious tie those who are definitely pulling the Party in an anti-Party direction."

And,

"Conciliatory phrase-mongering is no less harmful and liable to lead people astray than liquidationism. Conciliatory phrase-mongering obscures the essence of the matter, substitutes aspirations and good intentions for an estimate of the real tendencies and real relationship of forces in the Party, impedes the coming together of those who could and should come together by attempts to play at unity with those who at the present time do not want to and cannot unite."

Comrade Henry Winston's wonderful words at the 22nd Convention of our Party in 1979 was a prophetic warning:

"Factionalism is usually the work of the enemy from within. Factionalism is usually coordinated with outside repressive measures to weaken the Party, to undermine the Party, to destroy it. The fight against factionalism is a fight against alien concepts and alien practices within the Party. Our Party grows stronger as it forges the struggle against factionalism. But factionalism often develops under the cover of 'free discussion,' whereas in reality it makes impossible free discussion within the Party.

Comrades, factionalism is a most destructive force. It is incompatible with membership in our Party."

Comrades, we can still stop the implosion. I remain convinced that there is more that unites than divides us. Let's end it now, and get on with our revolutionary work.

If there is any lesson in the history of our Party, it is that factional splits from our Party have a very short lifespan. Don't waste your revolutionary energy. We can only do it together.

Whatever the outcome of this convention, and whatever role I will play, I will continue to seek for the path of unity on an honest, principled basis. I have no personal axes to grind. I have no other interests to serve.

**SUMMARY** ■ Let me start by saying a few things about factionalism. First, this 25th Convention has overwhelmingly voted to end factionalism. That is the most basic decision we made. That being said, I think we should have a certain attitude and approach from now on. We have had the pre-convention discussions. They are over now. I think they have been mainly positive. We must take steps to guarantee that the discussions continue. However, in the future, we must not, in the name of democracy, publish

garbage or slander. And we must put an end to publishing FBI-type articles. We have had too many of them.

This convention is a new beginning, a rebirth of our Marxist-Leninist, working-class revolutionary Party. We will see this more and more as time goes by. In this sense, I agree with the comrade who said there's a positive side to the factional struggle. The debate has given rise to a whole new cadre — mature, disciplined, able and confident. This is so all over the country. Many comrades matured politically and ideologically in a matter of months.

The older comrades became younger and the younger comrades became more mature.

I have given some thought to the approach we should now take on factionalism. The decision by some that they would not split with the Party is important. The reason this decision was made is that many signers of the "Initiative" didn't want to split the Party. The majority of them did not want to destroy the Party. They signed it for many different reasons, but didn't want to go that far. Therefore, those who did want to split the Party couldn't go through with it because their followers did not want a split. We have to adopt a positive approach to these comrades who refused to go along with such a destructive act. They are not anti-Party.

I want to suggest an approach in relation to comrades who signed the "Initiative," and other comrades who have been involved in factional activities. I am sure many comrades are doing some rethinking. What matters is what happens from now on. This is the attitude we have to adopt and develop throughout the Party.

But it should be a two-sided approach. Factionalism is at an end now. We are not going to permit it. Never again. Never again. But it is much too easy to stop saying hello to comrades. It is much too easy to refuse to shake hands with comrades who have been on the other side of the struggle. I think the Party has spoken here. The line is clear on these questions in the Party now. So we will pursue this approach, but with a certain sense of give and take. Discussions and educational work have to take place. But factionalism must not be permitted again. That's the lesson of this convention.

Let me briefly suggest that there is some self-criticism we must do. It is almost inevitable that in this kind of a struggle you cut corners. When you cut corners you do it at the expense of democracy and democratic rights. So we have to take a look at ourselves now, see what corners we've been cutting — what is and what is not democratic. In a factional struggle you don't have the time. And of course there's a lot of subjectivity. Now that it is over we have to take a look at ourselves, at how we function. In other words, we have to reinvigorate criticism and self-criticism in the life of the Party.

There is another problem related to the factional situation that we have to give some thought to. It is clear that the more extreme elements in the factional situation have reached such a level that it is difficult to separate or distinguish their activities from those of enemy agents.

That's just a fact of life. It is very difficult sometimes to differentiate — What is factionalism and what is the work of the enemy? This is because of the extreme behavior of those involved in factional activity. How to separate these elements is a most important question. We have to do more to find ways of separating those who have serious and honest criticism from those who — as Chicago says — engage in "cop talk."

We have to make clear what behavior is destructive and impermissible. I am going to suggest to the new National Committee that we set up a committee to make a study and come up with a new set of guidelines on Communist behavior. The guidelines should say that we will criticize impermissible behavior once, twice, and then the third time we will have to take disciplinary action. We have to combine this approach with a guarantee that we do not violate established democratic procedures. We have to find a balance. However, I do think we need such guidelines.

A few more words on factionalism. I think in the situation we tend to see only the negatives. But it did bring up all kinds of important issues. So we should very openly take a look at all the issues that have come up for discussion in a non-factional atmosphere, and thereby draw whatever has been positive. I think there are some important and good ideas that have come up that we should take a look at.

A few more words on what is the cause of the crisis in socialism. My basic idea is that when one deals with science you cannot pick and choose. Or, deal with questions subjectively. This is not scientific. Therefore, you can't take one attitude on a set of facts and then take a different attitude on the same set of facts in another case. Science has a set of laws that you have to apply. This applies to an analysis of the crisis in socialism. Waffling with facts is also not permissible in science. You have to deal with facts as they are. The approach of taking a little bit of this and a little bit of that is also not scientific. This approach doesn't explain anything. It becomes a coverup of the cause of the crisis.

If one rejects the idea that the crisis in socialism is related to wrong policies, to human error, or, as the Indian Communist Party said, to bad management, then your choices are limited. Then you have to ask, if it is not that then what is the cause? Of course, the answer is that there is something basically, or inherently wrong with the socialist system. That is what I reject. That is what I think we should reject. We should not play around with this.

In fact, you are limited to the concept that the crisis is caused by the systemic flaws in socialism. There is no other choice if you reject the idea that the cause is human error and policy mistakes. It is one or the other. This is a scientific approach. For example, to speak about mass murder, terrorism, bureaucracy as if they are not related to wrong policies and human error. Of course they are. They do not come from nowhere. They are part of wrong policies and human errors. Therefore, just to make a list of all the terrible things that happened, some of which are

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true, does not explain the real cause of the crisis. That is what follows wrong policies and human mistakes.

Maybe some think that human error is not a strong enough way of putting it. The crimes of Stalin were not caused by socialism. This is an important question because you can't defend socialism if you don't understand this. Sooner or later you will conclude that there is something basically wrong with the socialist system. And this is a wrong conclusion. I can see that it would be difficult to accept this because some comrades would have to change their thinking. But science is science. And you have to accept facts.

This convention has molded an attitude and an approach. It is almost hard to believe the wonderful speeches that were made here, the wonderful cadre who have emerged here, so many young comrades. What especially stands out is the fact that so many of our emerging cadre are workers, women and youth, Black,

Brown and white.

The participation of workers at this convention, the leadership and spirit they gave it, the working-class composition of the new National Committee, are factors that demonstrate that this Party is more and more a working-class party.

We have developed a wonderful new cadre. We have now for instance a good crop of excellent writers, great speakers. We have a whole new set of Communist personalities, who appear consistently on radio and television and do a great job. They have become public personalities that we have to promote. And I think some great organizers have also emerged.

I believe we now have a strong foundation upon which to build unity. And the way we will build on it is through immersing ourselves in the struggles of our class and people. Let's go out and do it. □

*Editorial continued -*

see a better Party will resume their work based upon the decisions of the 25th Convention. Our Party left Cleveland strengthened and determined to intensify our participation in the economic struggles, to link the many fights for reform to the struggle for socialism and to increase the fight for peace and strengthen international solidarity with Cuba, South Africa, the peoples of the Middle East and the forces of socialism and progress world wide □

# The 25th convention and the fight for Party unity

JARVIS TYNER

The recently-held 25th Convention of the Communist Party USA was the most dramatic, and perhaps the most decisive convention in the past 25 years. Reflecting the enthusiasm and political outlook of the majority of the delegates, one young steelworker described it as "a great victory for our Party and the working class."

The Convention defeated efforts to move the Party to the right. Calling on the Party to unify by building the broad-based movement against the deepening economic crisis of capitalism, the Convention focused on the growing hardships and sharpening attack faced by the U.S. working class, the racially oppressed, youth, women and seniors. It strongly endorsed the unity of Black, Brown and white as necessary for a successful fightback.

By an overwhelming majority vote, the revolutionary workingclass character of the Party was reaffirmed. Marxism-Leninism was upheld as the Party's theoretical and ideological foundation, and democratic centralism as its organizational principle. As the special political resolution stated, "the struggle between the working class and capitalist class remains the most basic contradiction in U.S. society. It is the most important vehicle for developing class consciousness and advancing the struggle for real democracy."

The Convention also declared its unshakable solidarity with the socialist countries and the socialist cause, and rededicating the Party to the goal of socialism, USA.

Convention delegates spoke their minds and voted as they saw the issues, rejecting a factional grouping which had been actively organizing outside of Party structures and in violation of collective decisions to advance their political agenda. In the final weeks before the Convention they circulated a petition, cynically entitled the "Initiative to Unite and Renew the Party," with which they attempted to form a bloc of supporters.

The debate and decision-making process of the Convention was democratic and honest, and produced forthright results.

**THE SETTING** ■ The 25th Convention took place at a time when the world Communist and workers' movement was facing its most serious external attack and internal crisis. Political commentators of the right, center and left had declared communism dead and were predicting the demise of the CPUSA. Some Parties had in fact collapsed, including large and influential ones. There was a lot of uncertainty about which way things would go and as the Cleveland convention approached, one sensed a deep concern that the collapse occurring in other Parties not happen here.

The atmosphere at the Convention was charged; it was clear that this was a struggle for the political survival of the Party.

That the Communist Party is a party of action was underscored by the many colorful banners hanging in the hall, which had been carried by Communists in recent demonstrations. Among them were "Defend Labor's Rights," from the march of labor and its allies on Solidarity Day II; "Sanctions to End Apartheid," from the rally at Yankee Stadium in NY welcoming Nelson and Winnie Mandela; "Defend Socialist Cuba;" from the demonstrations to prevent US intervention against our socialist neighbor.

Emphasizing the need for unity were the main banners: "Black, Brown and white, Unite and Fight;" and at the front of the hall: "Unity of Our Class, Our People, and Our Party."

**DELEGATES** ■ The more than 500 delegates who filled the hall comprised a beautiful mosaic of the U.S. working class. The class, racial, national, gender and age composition of the delegates reflected the great vigor and potential of the Communist Party, and made clear that it is not in decline, as critics inside and outside had charged.

The Convention was a multiracial gathering of predominantly workingclass activists and leaders; young, middle-aged and seniors; men and women, from all kinds of movements of struggle, from every region of the country.

The delegates represented 31 districts from 37 states. Sixty three percent of the delegates were workers (14% industrial workers; 41% service workers; 5% retired industrial workers; 3% retired service workers.) The majority of the delegates were union members.

Forty percent of the delegates were racially and nationally oppressed, including 15% African American, 10% Chicano/Mexican American, 3% Puerto Rican, 5% Latin American/Caribbean, 2% Asian/Pacific Island, 2% Native American Indian and 3% Middle Eastern.

Forty-three percent of the delegates were women.

The statistics on the age of the delegates are also significant: over 70% were 55 and under; 46% were under 45 years of age; 12% were under 25. Only five percent were in the 55 to 64 age range, which reflects to a certain extent the "missing generation" of the 1950s. 25% of the delegates were over 65. The Convention was honored by the presence of many Party veterans, including some charter members.

Members of the Young Communist League also played an important role as delegates with tremendous experiences in organizing the youth and student movement, and as part of the very disciplined and effective

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staff. With their militancy, partisanship and enthusiasm, they affirmed the validity and relevance of Marxism Leninism, the struggle for socialism and the Communist Party, USA.

This was a convention well endowed with both experience and energy, which bodes well for the future, and exposes the false picture of "old timers" versus "new thinkers."

The class character of the event and its participants was enhanced by the staff, which consisted of mainly workingclass comrades, especially from the industrial Midwest. Throughout the weekend, there were expressions of pride in the multi-racial workingclass composition of the Party, a composition that could not be duplicated by any other political party in the United States.

**REPRESENTING THE MEMBERSHIP** ■ The 25th Convention was also one of the largest and most representative in the Party's history, with the greatest proportion of members having voice and vote than perhaps ever before.

The ratio of delegates per number of members was also higher than ever before, which meant greater grassroots participation. The National Committee voted to allow clubs to nominate delegates from their own ranks, who in most cases were chosen to be delegates at the district conventions. (The Party's constitution requires that delegates to the national convention be elected at the district conventions.)

These proposals produced over 100 more delegates than the 24th convention.

The majority of the outgoing National Committee supported these democratic measures aimed at increasing the involvement of the active membership. Ironically, those who were most vociferous in calling for more democracy objected to enhancing the role of clubs in the nominating process, and to a large convention.

**SLANDERS AGAINST THE CONVENTION** ■ The Convention has of course its share of detractors. Leading figures associated with the "Initiative" faction, who tried but failed to take over the Party in Cleveland, are actively trying to distort what happened as part of their continuing effort to split the Party and form a new organization.

It has been charged that some delegates were "locked out" and the Convention was "rigged" so that certain views would prevail.

There were credentials challenges involving approximately fifty people from six districts. Most of these cases had to do with the failure of the leadership in those districts to comply with the criteria and timetables set by the National Committee in a long, detailed and contentious discussion in May of 1991. This meeting was attended by almost all of the district leaderships, and its decisions were twice published and distributed to every member of the Party.

Decisions on the credentials challenges were influenced by substantial evidence that there had been an attempt to inflate numbers in some of these districts. It is

significant to note that even if every challenged delegate had been seated and even if every one of them had supported the "Initiative" (and not everyone would have), the outcome of the votes would be the same.

This charge – that legitimate delegates were "disenfranchised" – became one of the main attacks. But the bottom line from which the majority of delegates would not be moved was that the rules would only be fair if they applied to everyone, and were upheld equally; that these were elementary standards for a workingclass organization, and particularly during difficult times.

There was no rigging. The delegates – the Party's rank and file – democratically decided the credentials issue.

**MEDIA DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN** ■ Rarely has a Communist Party convention received any significant media coverage; usually the capitalist press tries to ignore Party events. This time, however, the media has widely disseminated distorted assessments. A flood of slanderous articles have appeared since the December 6-8 gathering in Cleveland, Ohio. For example, the *New York Times* (12/9/91) described it as a "show of muscle to silence unwanted voices," and charged that the leadership had hired armed Cleveland police to protect themselves from Party dissidents. This absurd charge comes from the main capitalist newspaper – which is also the leading voice of Wall Street – and is being echoed by the factional grouping.

The notion that the police were used to control the political opposition is a complete falsehood. The Cleveland hotel management, after reading press reports predicting "trouble," insisted on hiring an off-duty policeman as part of the contractual arrangement. This security guard sat in the outer hallway by the elevators; at no time was he inside the convention hall.

The Communist Party did not want or need police protection. As is the usual practice, the Convention was secured by Party members, mainly workers, Black, Brown and white, men and women.

Writing in the *Guardian*, Carl Bloice (former Associate Editor of the *People's Weekly World*) asserts that there was "an absence of substantial debate on the most critical questions facing the Party or the movement for socialism in the world." He refers to the election process as a "quasi-purge."

In that same publication, Max Elbaum, an editor of *Crossroads* magazine who is associated with leaders of the "Initiative" group, says that the Convention was "rigged" and showed the "tyrannical side of communism." [*Crossroads* is published by a grouping that continues the now-defunct "Line of March," and has set itself up as the new center of strategic wisdom for the U.S. Left.] Elbaum quotes one of the leaders saying "what happened was that Gus Hall and his group turned the CP into a sect." In an article in the *Nation* (2/10/92), he also promotes the lie that "Party leaders had arranged for the Cleveland police."

**THE CONVENTION MAJORITY** ■ Having failed to win a majority of the delegates, the faction began a campaign to portray them as unaware of the issues and unable to make intelligent judgments. At a reportback meeting in New York, a leading member of the faction described the Convention majority as "comatose." In his *Guardian* article, Carl Bloice says that "especially from some smaller districts," the delegates were "completely ignorant of what the discussion has been about." This delegate majority has been variously referred to as "sheep-like," "in denial," and "nothing more than a cult."

This arrogant and spurious characterization is itself based on "denial" on a refusal to recognize that the delegates to the Convention were highly motivated – not by blind faith and ignorance – but by clear political beliefs and conviction based on knowledge and working class experience. The factional grouping denies workers can think critically and independently; it denies the fact that workers were not intimidated by pseudo-intellectual snobbery.

From the early hours, it was clear that the delegates were fully aware of the issues, of the meaning of factionalism and what was at stake. Although the preconvention period did not begin officially until May, there had been intense discussion and debate going on for about two years, in meetings, forums and Party publications.

This was a most informed Convention. Delegates had read hundreds of pages of documents and articles. The slander about the delegates' "ignorance" plays on anti-working class attitudes and reveals the class outlook and background underlying the political positions of the faction.

The delegates were anything but "comatose" in the words of a young Ohio steelworker: "When the [workers] saw some of the factionalist activity, we had to deal with the question of ideology. Ideology was always something that we said, let Party leaders take care of it, I'm just going to work, I don't have to deal with it. But never again."

An African American scholar from Illinois expressed the militant partisanship that typified the gathering: "I learned to be proud of being an African American before I joined this Party. But I learned in the Party that for African Americans to be free, we must have socialism. I learned to be proud to be a woman before I joined the Party. But it was in this Party that I learned that for women to be free we must have socialism."

And from an African American trade unionist from Missouri: "Democracy is a class concept. When the slave masters were denied the right to own slaves, they said it was undemocratic; but they had to be denied that right. In this organization we believe that every member has a lot of rights, but one of them is not the right to disrupt the Party."

The attack on the Convention comes from those former leaders who had hoped to take over the Party and move it in a social democratic, even liquidationist direction. They refuse to accept the Convention's complete

rejection of their politics.

The critical fact that has been consistently left out of almost all the negative coverage is that, in violation of the Party's constitution, the "Initiative" faction organized a simultaneous counter-convention in a room across the street from the Party Convention.

"Room 211" of the Cleveland Municipal Center was the scene of workshops and lectures; it was a place to discuss the politics and tactics of influencing the legitimate Convention's direction. Many people who were not delegates were flown in from around the country to participate. A committee of spokespersons was set up and "authorized" to give the faction's version of events to the media.

Room 211 operated as a separate, second center of leadership and a second convention. It represented a qualitatively new level in the almost two-year campaign of a small grouping within the leadership to seize power, using factional and anti-constitutional methods.

In substance, more than another leadership was being organized: a pre-party formation was being constituted, and with one foot in and the other outside, this group sought to weaken the Party from within, take control of its press, and direct significant portions of its funds and other resources to this yet undefined formation.

In this campaign, the factionalists had the growing support of forces whose hostility to the working class and the Communist Party is well known and of long duration. It is no wonder, therefore, that the *New York Times*, the ultra-right *Washington Times*, and *Crossroads* all embraced the anti-Party, anti-working class efforts of the factional center.

The Convention delegates were shocked when the aim and extent of the faction's activities became clear. They were appalled by the harsh, anti-Party rhetoric and the hateful, cynical slogans against Gus Hall and others in leadership. Evidence of this cynicism was the button the factionalists circulated which said, "we must destroy the Party in order to save it."

The vast majority of the delegates understood the threat that this kind of politics represented.

The "Initiative" group's counter-convention and the use of extremely disruptive tactics were what motivated the majority of the delegates to reject their procedural proposals, interpretation of issues, and finally, election to the new leadership bodies. Although the Convention Presiding Committee had made efforts to include them in the leadership, on the condition that they give up the counter convention hall, they refused. It was for this reason delegates who might have supported their inclusion ultimately voted not to elect them. Leading personalities in the faction were nominated from the floor, and received very few votes.

**THE REAL DEBATE** ■ Behind the question of two conventions and much of the procedural wrangling lay the real debate, which was around the nature of the Party and workingclass forms of organization; most, if not all, of the

controversy flowed from this basic question.

Because of right opportunist pressures, the struggle for the survival of the Communist Party, USA, became even more significant. Among the leading figures in the faction were those who expressed clearly liquidationist notions, including proposals to drop the term Communist and to eliminate full-time political staff. Their concept of the press also reflected a downplaying of its ideological role and relationship to the views and positions of the Communist Party.

The presence of these well-known Communists notwithstanding, the political essence - right opportunism - of the leadership of the "Initiative" faction is undeniable. And it was this political essence which was democratically rejected at the Convention.

Opportunism arises from an incorrect assessment and response to developments in our country and in the world. After ten years of Reaganism, and a period of economic growth, some decided that capitalism was not in crisis and was growing stronger not weakening, drawing political conclusions from this. Coupled with the crisis in socialism, this was the source of opportunistic concessions.

An example of this was their position in the contentious debate on the question of democracy and the nature of the Party.

The faction assessed the developments in Eastern Europe as part of a worldwide "democratic upsurge," and made a strong appeal to concerns which had come to the fore about the relationship between democracy and socialism.

Proclaiming themselves champions of democracy and "new thinking," they characterized the leadership of the CPUSA as dominated by a "Stalinist clique" which rejected any new ideas and sought to oppress all opposition.

This characterization was but a cover for their real target - democratic centralism, and as the Convention approached the attack on it became more open. The factional grouping argued that it was an obsolete method of organization, an extremely self-serving position, since they were at the same time fighting for their "right" to violate collective decisions.

In an article on the method of Party leadership elections published during the preconvention discussion Charlene Mitchell and Daniel Rubin called for institutionalizing organized trends, arguing: "the election rules, to reflect the will for party unity, must permit people with different viewpoints to be elected in approximate proportion to their views among the members and delegates."

Their "new thinking" on inner Party democracy revolved around the establishment of recognized multiple centers of leadership, and on elevating "consensus" over majority rule; this was one of the clearest indications of their social democratic direction.

This was a call to abandon the struggle for ideological unity; to abandon majority rule, essential for a party of action; and to allow permanently established factions and the resulting perpetual debate and power struggle within

the leadership.

Rubin and Mitchell's concept of democracy is based on elevating the right of the individual to continually dissent above the right of the collective to discuss, make decisions and act. It is the elevation of petty bourgeois individualism and vacillation over workingclass collectivity and decisiveness.

When taken to its logical conclusion, what was advocated was the outlawing of Party unity. The notion was that leadership should or could be chosen based on which group one identified with. It would require therefore that individuals identify themselves with a grouping or tendency, in order to be considered for the leadership, which would also foster division and political paralysis.

The convention upheld majority rule and collectivity as the highest expression of democracy, as necessary, workingclass principles which flow from the objective reality of the class struggle.

Meeting the right opportunist challenge was the historic contribution of the 25th Convention. In his summary remarks, National Chair Gus Hall said the Convention had established that, "we are a Party based on the science of Marxism-Leninism; our roots are in the class struggle; our structure is based on the concept that Black-Brown-white unity is central to the struggle against monopoly capital, the struggle for a socialist USA."

**SOCIALISM** ■ The Convention overwhelmingly supported the main report delivered by Gus Hall, which analyzed the world and U.S. scene, including the current crisis in the world Communist movement and the socialist world.

The delegates were fully aware of the critical political situation confronting the Convention - internationally, domestically and internally. While looking critically at the mistakes in socialism's development, by a wide margin they remained committed to socialism and its achievement in the U.S., endorsing the line of the main report that "the flaws in the Soviet Union are not systemic...the crisis is caused by violations of the principles that socialism is based on. The crisis is caused by introducing capitalism into the structure of socialism. Socialism can and must be made better, more democratic, less centralized, etc. On the other hand, the crisis of capitalism is systemic. The roots of this crisis are in the private ownership and control of the means of production."

The Convention was very responsive to all calls for solidarity with the remaining socialist states, and particularly for solidarity with Cuba. This proletarian internationalist solidarity and partisanship to socialism reflected the delegates' deep understanding of what is at stake in the struggles against the economic crisis at home and in overcoming the crisis of socialism.

**BLACK, WHITE, BROWN UNITY** ■ One of the most fundamental issues raised in the preconvention period, and around which the struggle was most bitter, was on the status of the Party's work in the struggle against racism and for equality. Specifically, the issue was the degree and



significance of the reflections of racist influences in the Party and assessments of the Party's policy and approach to the struggle for equality, particularly of African Americans.

The charge was made that the Party had dropped the concept of the centrality of the struggle for African American equality, thereby abandoning that struggle.

There were two areas around which this debate took place. One, that the Party leadership did not give enough support to the Jackson campaign and the left wing of the Democratic Party, and two, that it could not build among African Americans. The explanation for this situation was said to be racism in the leadership. The factional grouping increasingly characterized the differences in the Party as being along racial lines, and worked to bring about a split between Black and white.

A particularly destructive aspect of the factionalism was the effort to pit different nationalities against each other. Indeed, petty bourgeois nationalism was promoted and became a significant means of fostering divisions.

The charge about neglect of the Jackson campaign was part of a larger debate on electoral policy, about which there have always been many tactical differences. In this instance, however, for the first time those differences were placed in racial terms. The Democratic Party was the main vehicle for African American empowerment, it was argued, therefore work within it was a measure of commitment to the struggle for equality. This was counterposed to the Party's longstanding, multi-leveled electoral strategy: working inside and outside the Democratic Party, in independent formations and campaigns, with the aim of promoting and helping develop independence from both political parties of big business; and advancing Communist Party candidates.

The distortions and attacks on this policy were nothing less than an attempt to use the national question to mask a thoroughly right opportunist approach, and to use the struggle on this question to split the Party along racial lines.

They also charged that recruitment of African Americans was declining, implying that this was due to racism in the Party. In fact during this period there were some excellent examples in several districts of recruitment of African Americans. At the same time, the overall rate of recruitment, as well as the organization of Party building, was at a low level, due in large part to the factional struggle in the leadership.

In response to the criticism that there had been a decline in vigilance against the influences of racism in the Party, the National Committee established a committee to examine the issue and make recommendations. Its report was critical of weakness in the leadership, yet was constructive, placing the struggle against racism in its class struggle context, and calling for raising the ideological level in the Party. "Everything rides on this question," declared the report, "the struggle for freedom, the struggle for socialism. We're in here to win this struggle. We have to keep our attention on the main thing".

The Convention delegates, Black, Brown and white, rebuffed all attempts to divide Communists along racial lines. The majority of African American delegates fought for – and voted to approve – the revolutionary working-class line of the main report and the special resolutions, and to reject factionalism.

The composition of the new leadership was based on politics, not race. The new National Committee, though 25% larger than before, has close to the same percentage of African Americans, and the number of Latinos increased. Significantly, the number of African American workers (mostly industrial workers) is more than double that of the last NC.

**COMMITTEE'S OF CORRESPONDENCE** ■ The "Initiative" group has rejected the Convention's authority, declaring it illegitimate, and has formed a splinter group called the "Committees of Correspondence." Based in New York City, the "Committees" have held two national meetings, and discussed a publication, organization, structure, finances and the holding of a conference.

Clearly they are organizing for a formal split, aiming to take as many members with them as possible. In fact some have already left the Party and are busy working for the "Committees" or have dropped out of activity.

However, there are signs of defections from their ranks, and many comrades who signed the "Initiative" are distancing themselves from the faction, as its intention to split becomes clear. All who accept the decisions of the 25th Convention are welcome to come back to the Party.

In Northern California the situation has gone farthest. At a district meeting a resolution was adopted calling for a break with the CPUSA and the formation of a separate organization, the "Independent Communists of California (ICC)." The ICC is envisioned as a "political organization" based on servicing the mass movements, not as a political party based on the working class.

Their concept of the role of this new political organization as a servicer of mass movements is significant. It differs fundamentally from the Communist view of the role of the Party. The Communist Party is a product of, is based in, and is linked to, the historic destiny of the working class; its strategic emphasis on the working class and industrial workers is not fortuitous but arises from a scientific understanding of monopoly capitalism and the specific role of different social and class forces. Our concept is to fight for leadership of the class, not to service spontaneous movements that come and go with every ebb and flow of the class struggle.

The document describing the ICC is an exercise in ideological disarray: it confuses mass movements with the working class, seeing no distinction between them in terms of strategic importance; it calls for the "enrichment" of dialectical and historical materialism with feminism and environmentalism; it applies the concept of centrality equally to the struggles of working people, the racially and nationally oppressed, and women – all are central, therefore none is central; it incorrectly applies the concept

of centrality. Rather than a concept leading to unity in struggle, it is used to establish a pecking order that ultimately divides the class and anti-racist struggles. In the resolution, the trade union movement receives no special emphasis and workingclass state power is totally left out, as is the basic concept of the class struggle to win political power. Clearly the main ideological influence on this group is petty bourgeois radicalism, not Marxism-Leninism.

Thus, this "new" political organization is very much like the "broad-based left movement of socialist-orientated people" that has been projected by the factional grouping in New York. In fact both proposals are clearly similar to those of earlier revisionists, foremost among them being Earl Browder, with the Communist Political Association in the 1940s, and John Gates' "socialist workingclass organization" in the 1950s.

At the 25th Convention the workers, particularly from the Midwest districts, saved the Party from this threat, declaring that they would "never let it be destroyed." The Convention solidified the Party's revolutionary workingclass essence and elected a stronger, more workingclass leadership.

Despite continued factional organizing, which has included efforts to attack the Party's financial base and resources, the appeal for unity has been repeated: at the first meeting of the National Board Gus Hall again called for "putting emphasis on what we agree on."

The Communist Party has exhibited great patience in

responding to post-convention provocations. The overwhelming majority of the Party membership has united around the decisions of the 25th Convention, and in fact, the factional situation affects only a few districts. Even there, large sections of the membership are rejecting the efforts to build separate structures and steal Party resources.

The National Board has called for stepping up the organization of the fightback around the economic crisis, with particular emphasis on helping to build the Mayor's March on Washington. The defeat of Bush and the ultraright in this year's elections is a top priority, as is increasing the work in solidarity with Cuba. The re-invigorated *People's Weekly World* has been enthusiastically received, and this year's fund drive goal has been set at half a million dollars.

Certainly, the acid test of the Convention's success will be increased participation in the movements of working people, and of course, growth in Party membership and press circulation.

There is room in the Party for differing views; Marxism-Leninism is a great, creative science. The basis exists for united action at this critical moment for the working people of our country and for the world movement. And act together we must.

Socialism remains the answer to the pressing problems generated by the crisis of capitalism. The 25th Convention shows that the Communist Party remains dedicated to its achievement. □

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# A Communist Party for the 90s

JUDITH LE BLANC

Our Party's national convention brings together representatives of the rank and file to shape policies that respond to the new moment in the class struggle. This is a truly exciting and dynamic process – it makes you want to say, we are having a historic convention.

Every convention is unique. This convention's uniqueness has been shaped by the sustained, 11 year offensive against the working class and oppressed people of our country and by the heightened aggressiveness of U.S. imperialism. And this offensive and the devastation it has wrought, are mirrored in the urgency and in the atmosphere of this convention.

The working class has been slammed by 11 years of the Reagan-Bush attack on every area of life. The attack is political, economic and ideological. But the importance of the working class and its consciousness and fightback have not diminished one bit—in fact, there is a growing upsurge. There are new levels of coalition and joint actions. Multi-racial unity is growing. We can and we must strengthen our Party's contribution, on every level, to this growing fightback.

We have had a great deal of discussion and debate about just what our role and contribution should be. This resolution on the Party is to answer that question. And it says, without hesitation, yes, we need a stronger, united, workingclass, Marxist-Leninist Party.

We say this despite the fact that Marxism-Leninism is under renewed attack. The main report by Comrade Gus Hall and the discussion last night shows that in fact Marxism-Leninism is a living, dynamic and necessary ingredient in the class struggle. Marxism-Leninism is what makes the Party's contribution to the fight strong and vibrant. The report and discussion show that despite the multi-faceted crisis, there is a basis for optimism because there is a way out. And this optimism is closely related to partisanship to our class and people.

Our Party is shaped by objective circumstances, by the dynamics of the class struggle, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, we are involved in many of the most important struggles of our day. On the negative side, we are not big enough and we are not growing fast enough.

One aspect of the damage that factionalism has done is the downgrading of our contribution and influence, which has been done publicly in some cases. Our level of activity has also been damaged by factionalism's inevitable internalizing effect.

And this in turn has produced an atmosphere that makes a thorough critical and self-critical review of our work very difficult. Despite these difficulties, however, I

think we do have a basis for assessing where the Party is at and where the rank and file wants us to go.

The process in the panel on the Party, the Draft Discussion Document, the many National Committee discussions and reports, and the debate in Dialog and the PWW represent a solid basis for determining what we need to do from this convention to strengthen, build and unite.

Part of the ideological attack on the working class and racially oppressed peoples is the attack on the concept of the necessity of a working class party. This is under attack from the left and from the right. With the crisis in the socialist world, this attack has sharpened.

Our 25th National Convention must take a stand for the necessity of the Party. Our members want to hear us make a strong statement on what kind of Party we are and what kind of Party we are going to build. That's what this resolution aims to do.

During the last two years in which there has developed an organized factional group, there has also been a stepped-up campaign by phony left groups against us. While it is a campaign to denigrate our role, it also has some new aspects. The main example is that the petty bourgeois, anti-Communist left has stepped up pressure to move us into their narrow circle of supposedly new thinking intellectuals.

Rather than give into this pressure our focus must instead be on the broad left which is developing in the labor movement, in the Black and other nationally oppressed communities, among students and intellectuals, and in the mass movements. Our approach to building left unity must be anchored in the working class and based on a class analysis.

We've had a lot of discussion since our last convention about the effects and problems of the right-wing attack and pressures. A lot of emphasis has been placed on this because it flows from the strategy of monopoly capital and the Reagan and Bush Administrations, to restrict and even destroy the rights of working people and the racially oppressed. The strong pressure from the right is an objective aspect of this period of reaction and setbacks. How could it be otherwise? It has been necessary to focus on this pressure and to struggle against its influence on the Party's policies and practices. This takes the form of the struggle against right opportunism. Awareness of this problem will help us develop correct effective tactics in the labor and other mass movements.

The resolution before you today puts forward a basic definition of our working class, Marxist-Leninist political party, in response to the discussion that has unfolded. The key thing advanced in the resolution is that the working class, of necessity, needs a revolutionary, political party. The CPUSA is objectively indispensable.

The following is the introduction to 'The Resolution on the Party' given by Judith Le Blanc, Organization Secretary of the CPUSA at the 25th Convention.

And we will not build a working class party without the working class, especially its industrial core. We cannot be a working class party in the abstract; it is not an academic question. We cannot build a mass party without concentrating on the majority class, the working class. We must be a party of, by and for the working class.

We cannot support the concept of a working class party without fighting for the leading role of the class in all of the mass movements, and for simultaneously building the Party amongst those movements and in the working class in the first place. That is why we must affirm our policy of industrial concentration and building in the shops and working class neighborhoods. If we don't have a policy of concentration on the working class, concentration on the key issues confronting the working class, promotion of working class cadre, standards, and a political style of work that is based on collectivity and democratic centralism, we will not have a working class political party.

Some in the pre-convention period have argued for loosening up on our structure, and moving more in the direction of emphasizing the rights of individuals to expression and action apart from and in opposition to collectives. We must reject this direction. We must affirm the importance of our method of individuals coming together in a collective discussing, debating and organizing to take action. We must affirm collectivity the need for organized, systematic disciplined debate, decision making and action.

For this to be a reality we must also elevate the ideological role of our Party and press, and especially the ideological life of clubs. Some of the honest confusion that the *Initiative* and the *Message to the NC* created among our membership was a reflection of weaknesses in our

ideological work, and the kind of ideological training that we've given to cadre. The ideological training of cadre will make it possible for us to achieve a bigger and more united Party. And must be placed as a top priority after this convention.

When we discuss Party unity, we are talking about ideological unity, not only an organizational approach to this question. Ideological unity is unity in form and content. This is most important. Ideological unity is necessary in order to have a common approach to building among the working class and industrial concentration. Ideological unity is necessary so that the Party can raise the level of class consciousness in the broad people's movements and inspire them to see the necessity of being linked with the labor movement and the working class. Ideological unity requires a Party that fights daily for reforms but never leaves the struggle for socialism in the by and by.

This resolution defines and therefore defends the integrity of elected leadership bodies and collectives and democratic centralism.

And finally, comrades, this resolution affirming us as a Marxist-Leninist working class Party is part of our internationalist duty. Parties around the world have been discussing many of the same things we have, and our Party which lives and works in the center of U.S. imperialism can make an important contribution to the direction of that debate.

In Gus Hall's report, he said we must choose between a convention which results in implosion or one which ignites us into action on the economic crisis facing our class and people, and builds a stronger and united Party. I know that this convention will do the right thing. □

# Update on the Soviet Union

MIKE DAVIDOW

Comrades, it is a privilege to be here. I can tell you that stalwart Communists in the Soviet Union have great respect for the U.S. Party, a sound party based on Marxism-Leninism. And they have particularly a great respect for Gus Hall. I think it's based on the fact that Gus has played an extraordinary role in his own Party, and his report to this Convention demonstrated that. But also it is based on the extraordinary role he has played in the international arena in many difficult situations. And Gus, I want you to know that the remarks you made here about the Soviet Union are going to mean a great deal to them. They told me that one of these days they want to hear from Gus Hall, and they are going to hear from you: I have been assigned to write a report on this Convention for *Sovietskaya Rossia*, the largest circulation newspaper in the Russian Republic.

I don't think I have to tell you about the situation, the critical tragic situation for us, for the Soviet people, that is now taking place. I'm not going to repeat what I have previously written for *Political Affairs* and other publications here. Now I want to deal particularly with the question of the Party. You have to understand what the Communist Party means for a socialist country where it is in power, and what it means for a country like ours where we're far from being in power.

In the Soviet Union the tragedy began with the attack on the Party. And what a systematic attack it was, for six years – on its history, ideology and leadership. This created an atmosphere which encouraged the belief that the Party had harmed the Soviet people. And the further tragedy is that they started by attacking Stalin but very soon went further, to attack Lenin. Lenin, they said, was the source of all the misery; the October Revolution was the source of the tragedy of the Soviet people.

And who do you think led this attack? It was led by leaders in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, members of its Central Committee. Yeltsin was a member of the Central Committee when he launched his attack on the Communist Party. Popov, prominent in this attack, is now the Mayor of Moscow. He was an outstanding Soviet economist at one time. And the anti-Communist who is now the President of the Ukraine was for many years in charge of ideology in the Ukrainian Communist Party.

You now have renegacy on a scale that is unprecedented. This has resulted in the Soviet Union suffering from the destruction of the Party founded by Lenin. I'm not going to go into the history – I do that in my book, which I hope will be published here. That goes into the historical background, all the way back to the early days of the Soviet Union, then into the period of Stalin, because

you have to look upon the thing as a whole to gain a historical perspective. And it's a very complex situation.

You have to understand that you're dealing with a country that has a thousand-year history, of which there have only been 74 since the October Revolution. And I think we didn't understand it properly. In my opinion even the Soviet CP didn't understand it properly. History weighs heavily upon the people, and you can't make up for it in a short time.

I want to repeat: the single most devastating blow was the destruction of the Communist Party. The Party was the target from the very beginning, the main target. And I want you to know comrades, you have to guard the unity of your Party as the apple of your eye.

Comrades, counterrevolution has temporarily triumphed in the Soviet Union, counterrevolution full-blown. I have to tell you this honestly. It is very painful to live in the Soviet Union today because you feel the decay and destruction that is taking place – moral, political, social decay and destruction – systematically conducted by anti-Communists using radio, television, and most of the press.

I say it is a tremendous tribute to the Soviet people and to the Soviet Communists that, with all this, they are withstanding it and that there is a solid base which is going to show itself very shortly. Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union triumphed because the backbone of socialism, the Party, was eaten away by the rodents of treachery, gnawed at by the greedy teeth of careerism, drained of its life juice by passivity and capitulation. And that started with the General Secretary.

Counterrevolution triumphed because the Party cement of internationalism was watered down by an unchallenged nationalism that has spread all over now. Socialist ideology, which had been stifled by the dead hand of dogmatism, was destroyed by right opportunism. The Party was hit by fragmentation and destruction of ideology. Its discipline was eroded by amorphousness. And, to those who talk of doing away with democratic centralism, if you follow that advice here you'll no longer have a Party like the one you have but one like that in the USSR where its vast number, 20 million, was made ineffective and paralyzed by division.

I want to tell all of you that it has been so painful for me to see what has been taking place here. On the one hand, it is painful because it took place at all. But on the other hand, I am convinced that it is only temporary, because of what I observe of the reaction of the Convention. It is painful because this kind of provocation and what lies behind it can lead to the death of a Party, despite the best intentions people have, and I know many people have honest intentions.

Everyone has to understand that differences, dis-

Remarks made to the 25th National Convention, CPUSA by Mike Davidow, People's Weekly World correspondent in Moscow

agreements, opinions, views, all have a place, if properly confined to the Party, if expressed in the proper Party procedure. But once decisions are made you can't have a Party without carrying out those decisions, and that means the majority has to decide, with respect for the minority and minority views. But it's the majority that has to decide. That is the procedure in every organization and that is so in our Party.

I want to tell you, comrades, that now the Soviet Party is in a very difficult situation. Its resources, assets, buildings, money, schools, press, typewriters, if you please, all have been taken. When I look at the Soviet comrades, I think to myself that even in the days of McCarthyism we had it easier. We at least had a place to meet. It's hard for them to get a place to meet. They meet in one place, they meet in another place. And as soon as it is found out that they have a meeting place there is pressure to prevent them from meeting. In the Baltics - Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia - the Party is illegal, underground, hounded and persecuted. First Secretary Lubitch of the Communist Party, of Latvia, went on a hunger strike for 30 days because he was harassed and persecuted. This is happening in the Soviet Union! And of course you know that the Party is illegal in the Russian Federation.

There has now been formed a Committee for the Defense of Communists in the Soviet Union. Just imagine, comrades, a Committee for the Defense of Communists in the Soviet Union! My wife is the secretary and I am working with them in an indirect way. They need help. They need, first of all, a Committee for the Defense of Democratic Rights in the Soviet Union to be set up right here. That would be a tremendous contribution. They need to feel that there is support for them. They need to feel that there's a real outcry against all this. Protests should be ringing at the doorstep of Yeltsin and Gorbachev as well. They should know how the people feel about this. There should be letters and statements in the press.

I appeal to our paper, the *People's Weekly World*, to play an important part in this effort. It carried an excellent story about the situation by Fred Weir of the *Canadian Tribune*. I helped to work on the material and I hope that that paper, but especially our paper, continues now to pay a lot of attention to this fight for the rights of Communists in the Soviet Union.

Now I want to tell you about the fightback that's taking place. I don't want to leave you with the feeling that everything is dark, that everything is hopeless. On the contrary, comrades, socialism in the Soviet Union has very deep roots. Yes, it is true that control is in the hands of the forces of reaction, anti-Communist forces. Moscow is now the center of anti-Communism, make no bones about it. They're in control of political power, they're in control of the media, etc., but they do not have total control. They have not eliminated the most fundamental factor of all and that is the socialist economic base. When they tackle that you will see the real struggle, which is

already beginning and will develop as they take away from the workers the gains that were won in the 74 years: their cheap housing; the free schools - now they're starting to charge money for schools; the free medical care - now they have private clinics that cost money; the health resorts that they had, that you and I went to, and now cost a lot of money for a week's stay. With the nibbling away, piece by piece, of their benefits, there is the beginning of a fightback.

Gus correctly pointed out that the November 7th demonstration and march in Moscow were a signal. It was the beginning of a great awakening. Let me tell you that I witnessed this on November 7th. There was never anything like it. I have a leaflet here that I'm going to leave for you. You can have it translated. This is a leaflet that mobilizes. And who do you think signed it? The Coordinating Committee of the Working People's Council of Moscow.

In July of this year there was a conference, a rank and file conference that set up this committee. Communists played the leading role and Communists were in leading positions, but it was not only Communists. It was this group that organized the November 7th demonstration. It was a rank and file demonstration. I didn't recognize a single Party leader who spoke at this meeting; they were all from the ground up, workers in the main.

Do you want to know something? When Elena and I got out of the train we wondered how many people would be going along with us - the whole train came. When we got to the Square they were pouring in from all sides, spontaneously. The government had decreed that November 7th is no longer a legal holiday; it doesn't exist anymore. But the people of the Soviet Union and especially those who have deep traditions, they responded. It was not only the numbers, it was also the spirit. When they answered the attack upon Lenin you just had to see it and feel it. Right around Lenin's tomb they gathered. There were a hundred thousand people there and they hollered: "Lenin! Lenin! Lenin!" and "Down With Privatization! Down With Capitalism! Down With Gorbachev! Down with Yeltsin!"

In conclusion, I hope you'll read my book when it comes out. I say a lot more in it. Now I just want to say, comrades, remember why you're here. What you are accomplishing is, of course, first for the American people, the American working class. But remember also that what you are doing is also for the international movement; for the Soviet people who have done so much for us. And remember that when you debate and discuss; remember that when you relate to each other.

Remember that comradeship is the finest word there is. They are trying to erase that in the Soviet Union. They talk about Gosboda and Gosbaja [Mr. and Mrs.] but they will not erase Tovarish, because comradeship expresses everything. Long live comradeship! □

# Voices from the 25th convention

**Evelina Alarcon, District Chair,  
Southern California**

*(Accepting the Banner District Flag presented at each convention to the district with the highest achievement in growth and influence since the previous convention).*

Comrades, I am really overwhelmed – for once I am at a total loss for words. I didn't know this was going to happen. I guess the only thing I want to say is that it was clear to me that the situation was a matter of the life of the Party and the survival of the Party. In Southern California we did everything we could to fight for this Party.

It's true that there were times when it was pretty rough, but I know one of the things that kept me going was watching Gus Hall. When I would at times think, how can we go through more, I'd think about how Gus Hall spent eight years of his life in prison. His family has been persecuted. And I'd look at the veteran comrades, and everything that they've gone through in their entire lives, and I said, "Nope, you've gotta keep on."

And the other thing was that I knew what would happen if we didn't give everything to fighting to maintain the Party, which meant that we had to build it even though we were under a lot of attack. What would happen if we didn't have the Party is that our class would hurt, and people of our country would hurt immeasurably. We had to do everything possible to prevent that.

It was a matter of building and fighting for our Party. So I just want to say to all of you comrades, to all of the districts that have come here fighting: this Convention is so historic and so meaningful to all of us, especially those of us in Southern California.

We have recruited a lot of comrades in this last period, and in the last four years we made a breakthrough, not only among Mexican Americans, but among Salvadorans and among Iranians, and we are very proud of that. The majority of our recruits are workers and the racially oppressed. I just want to say to all of you now, we can go forward and build our Party and put most of our emphasis on that.

I want to thank Gus Hall and Comrade Judith, who also went through a lot as an American Indian Comrade. And I think it is despicable what happened to Jarvis in New York, and I'm sure that we will correct that. About Jarvis I just want to say that while he was having a tough time in his district, and when half of California really paid token attention to our campaign for Secretary of State, Comrade Jarvis came and took my hand and campaigned with me, talked with steel workers, and really helped in our campaign. I'll never forget that.

There is a lot of love in this Party. We've got to keep that love going because we have a lot that is important for this country. Thank you comrades. □

**Alice, Indiana**

I have to reflect: what would be best to tell a group of people facing a major problem? What would help? And I remember in 1975, when I was working in the hospital as a licensed practical nurse. We started a union organizing campaign and they said, "Here are some cards, go out and get people signed up." Well, we approached all our friends and did not approach people we disliked. Then they said, "Well, you don't have enough cards so now you gotta approach people you dislike." So we approached the people we disliked and they said, "What! Are you crazy? We're not going to sign a union card," in their arrogant way. So, the organizers said, "Well, O.K., if you can't get them we'll just file for an election with what we have."

This was the first union [and] when we filed, we realized [after] counting up the cards, that we'd have to get more votes than we had. That was going to be hard because we had just a couple of weeks before the election. We discussed it and said that maybe we'd have to talk to the [other] people and see if we could convince them to go with us. We knew they hated us, so that would be a big job.

Well, it took us two years and I know without the help of the Communist Party, USA, we would never have done it. The Party said, "Hey, you're white. You work in a Black hospital and the satellite hospital is white. You'd better get yourselves out there and convince those white people it's in their interest to join hands with the Black workers downtown or you're never going to make it. You've got to convince people who don't want the union why they should have the union. You've got to convince them that the boss, the administrator, is not the real enemy. The enemy is in the White House; he allows your boss to function the way he does."

I think sometimes, when we got into a [union contract] fight, how we ended up walking side by side with some of those people we [formerly] couldn't stand, because it was our class interest to survive, to win an election, to have some justice on the job.

On my floor we had a housekeeper who couldn't speak English. She was Serbian. Everyone would go into the utility room and have a cigarette or take a little break. I came in emptying a bed pan and she was smoking a cigarette. We were talking and laughing. I finally got her to support the union. Well, she heard her boss – who was, like, 20 years her junior – coming down the hall and that woman, that housekeeper, put her cigarette out in the

Experts from some delegates remarks to the 25th convention, CPUSA

palm, in the flesh of her hand, because she was so intimidated that her boss would catch her on a so-called illegal break because she was sitting there talking to me; I couldn't believe it.

From then on I was permanently for the union, for justice. We have to talk to each other and communicate with one another, even those we dislike. There are people in this room that I've known for years, that I haven't seen for maybe 8 to 9 months. I bump into them and it's like, where do you stand on this Party stuff?

I don't know where the anger - well, I guess I do know where the anger comes from. We have positions we want to bring forward, to discuss in our Party, to make it more progressive. But, by God, if we leave or if we don't talk, or if we have hate for each other, forget it. It's in our self interest to stop hating and to start thinking about what we'll gain if, when we leave here, we can find those areas that we can unite on, not those things we hate about each other. □

### **Bahman Azad, NJ**

Comrades, this is a great honor for me to speak before this convention. Allow me before anything else to express my deepfelt pride in being a member of a party which has become a symbol of unswerving defense of Marxism-Leninism and socialism throughout the world.

I can say this because, coming from a Middle Eastern country myself and having been involved in the Communist movement there, I have witnessed through the years the great impact of the CPUSA's revolutionary adherence to the class struggle and ideology, and especially Comrade Gus Hall's ideological and theoretical contributions to the struggle of the people of the Middle East. The Communists in the Middle East, and for that matter throughout the Third World respect the CPUSA, and especially admire Comrade Gus Hall, as a symbol of working-class, anti-imperialist struggle at the heart of U.S. imperialism. They see in the CPUSA an unrelentant, militant ally which has fought alongside them against U.S. imperialism's aggression and exploitation in that region. Respect for our Party more than anything else stems from the Party's and Comrade Gus Hall's steadfastness in defense of Marxism-Leninism, working-class internationalism, peace and socialism.

Gus's report yesterday and the political resolution today are but a reflection of the Party's commitment to the same principles that have won the respect of Communists the world over. I personally express my pride in supporting these two documents and I would encourage comrades to unanimously adopt them as a guideline for the future work of the Party.

Comrades, in his report Gus repeatedly emphasized the need for unity in our party, especially in these troubled times. But as Lenin said, only a correct ideological and political line can guarantee the unity of the Communist Party. The factionalism that you are witnessing these days, on the surface appears to be an organiza-

tional problem, but in fact it's not. Rather, it is a consequence of ideological confusion and defeatist attitudes that have developed as a result of a setback in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Putting an end to factionalism, therefore, requires that we put an end to ideological confusion. It requires ridding ourselves of all kinds of right opportunist and Social Democratic ideas that spring up every time there is a downturn in the working-class movement and anti-imperialist struggle in the world.

Social Democracy, comrades, is not about democratizing socialism, it is not socialism in a different form. It is capitalism with a socialist mask. Social democracy is a bourgeois ideology that does not seek to eliminate exploitation, but just make it tolerable for some workers at the expense of others. Social Democracy is not the way to the future, it is the path to defeat and the destruction of the Party.

Now more than ever before we need Marxism-Leninism as a guiding light, not only for charting our future course but for understanding the shortcomings of the past. The CPUSA is and must remain a working-class, Marxist-Leninist Party; this is the only way to guarantee unity today and victory tomorrow. □

### **Bruce, Ohio**

Comrades, I'm a steelworker from Ohio. In a way, without being facetious, I want to thank those who created this crisis because, like so many others who went to work everyday, I took for granted this beloved party for many, many years. I never will do that again. Like many of the workers who saw things change a little bit, felt pretty uncomfortable when they saw some of the factionalist activity, we had to deal with the question of ideology. Ideology was always something that we kind of said, "Let party leaders take care of it, I'm just going to work, I don't have to deal with it." Never again! Never again!

I was clear on the question of democracy. We hear this word thrown around. The last number of speakers have talked about it. We were in the middle of a major fight over our contract at the same time the factionalist fight was going on, and people were raising this question, "What is democracy?" Everybody wants democracy; democracy is a class-based question. If we doubt that, comrades, read Lenin on Kautsky. Before I read Lenin on Kautsky, there was a fight when a Japanese company, Kovi, came in and took over half of our steel mill, USX. And the USX plant in Lorain, Ohio, started this major "democratic" change: "We're gonna have union/company cooperation, participation teams; we're gonna have everything." And the workers saw our union slipping away. Came contract time, unfortunately, the president of the union and his appointee were fired.

There was one other officer beside myself and one other comrade who did not like it, and we had to organize a rank and file group and work with the



International Union. We said that we would not allow ourselves to be split away from our International Union. They said, "Why don't we just take a poll on this, take a poll on that, take a poll on this latest company proposal? You don't need the union."

It culminated in a situation where we had 2500 workers at a mass meeting, called to go over the proposal that the company had sent out to the membership without going to the union. International union president, Lynn Williams, came in on that with instructions to work with us because we had organized it. And thank God for our party and our club, because without them we wouldn't have been able to conduct that fight.

At that meeting of 2500 workers the question of democracy was thrown all over the damn place. But I tell you, there were 200 to 300 company thugs there; their families were picketing. The newspapers were going crazy. The cry was, "we're gonna have democracy."

I'll tell you comrades, without one hell of a fight we would have lost our union that night. We had to organize on the floor. We had attacks on the stage against union officers and there were fist fights out there. We had to organize and jam through a strike vote at the last minute. It was called undemocratic in the bourgeois media, but that strike vote won and we had to escort the union leadership out with a phalanx of workers to get to their cars.

Within two weeks picket lines had been set up and we got the company back into negotiations. The company had to come through and meet the union demands they had not met previously. We had another meeting of 2500 union workers, and I tell you, nobody got in there without showing their union card. There was union literature on all the tables. Everybody understood what went on. The mikes were controlled and the workers controlled the floor. That was democracy then; it was union democracy; it was worker's democracy.

I would like to say one thing. At that time we did read Lenin on Kautsky and ideology took form. On the question of our paper and our party, the paper was always something we loved, but I feel this paper slipping away from us. We've gotta get it back. Workers have got to be published. We've had to fight to get our stuff in. Our party is a small party. Our party in Lorain is a small party, but we've recruited through these fights. The question of size is debated constantly here, up and down. And what we found is that by holding tight to democratic centralism and industrial concentration, we can move our class and we have done so. Our party will grow, but it will grow based on the class struggle. I have supreme confidence that we're gonna come out of here with a great workers' party. Thank you. □

## C., Connecticut

I am a product of this Communist Party. I stand before you as the president of my local union, the president

of the district, the vice president of the central labor council in my city. The work and the teaching that the Party has given me over the years has made me a better person, and has helped me be a better leader within the labor movement.

I think that the crisis as it is right now in this country means we have to leave this convention as a united body. We will not answer all of the questions. I think the Party's Constitution, the Party's guidelines will give us all the strength to go forward.

Building a Party of working-class people and our policy of industrial concentration are the key to our survival. I'm going to fight for that. Our struggles in my industrial union through the years have planted the seeds for a mass coalition of labor with the ministerial alliances, with people working for peace and the environment and so on, who have come to the union's struggle. □

## D.M., Illinois

I'd like to associate myself with the report of Comrade Hall, a report which challenges us to organize and mobilize the working class in defense of itself, against the economic policies that are causing havoc in our lives.

The report challenges us to say to this ruling class, "We are not you, we are not bourgeois men, we are not bourgeois women, we are working-class men, we are working-class women."

The report challenges us to sow the seeds of our working-class history, culture and heritage, as the handle that can be grasped by working-class people – Black, Brown, Red, yellow and white, men and women – in the fight against the complete collapse of our quality of life, while the rich wallow in the decadent squandering of our surplus value.

The report challenges us to work in our shops and working-class communities with greater valor and greater vigor. The report challenges us to relate to the homeless, the hungry and the unemployed, as working-class victims of the severest forms of impoverishment.

We in Illinois are not insensitive to the onslaught against our class and our people. We in Illinois are committed to experimenting with various approaches and forms to reach our class and our people on the economic and independent political action fronts. The Harold Washington experience in Chicago was a real, live expression of the truth of the analysis presented in Comrade Hall's report.

Finally, I'd like to express my personal appreciation to this working-class Party and its multi-racial, male-female working class leadership. I learned to be proud of being an African American before I joined this Party. But I learned in the Party that for African Americans to be free, we must have socialism. I learned to be proud to be a woman before I joined the Party. But it was in this Party that I learned that for women to be free we must have socialism. □

## W., Ohio

Comrades, I heard a number of trade unionists say that we didn't think we'd be at a Communist Party convention and go through some of the same experiences we do in our national union conventions – but it makes us feel at home. Thank you!

And, in the name of the United Steelworkers, the building trades, the auto workers, AFSCME, those unions of this city and this state, I again want to welcome you all to this city and industrial state of Ohio.

Especially in the name of the steelworkers we welcome Gus Hall to home base. This great steelworkers' union has grown and expanded far beyond the steel centers of northeast Ohio involved in the great Little Steel Strike which he and his associates led. And the militant spirit of that union is felt throughout all of this great industrial state; Cleveland and Ohio labor know how to build unity to fight the financial and corporate power structure. With the recent growth in the service sector and government unions, AFSCME has become a major union in this industrial state, and an influential union. And the AFL-CIO of the state of Ohio has merged the best of the old and the best of the new and elected a combined leadership of steelworkers and AFSCME union leaders to the two top offices in the state AFL-CIO – an integrated leadership – presenting a real coalition of Black and white workers, that really counts at the top.

The Cleveland Federation recently renewed its leadership by electing the best, most militant leaders from the steelworkers and building trades to the two top offices of the Cleveland Federation, and added to its executive board in order to accommodate more Black and women leaders in the Cleveland Federation. No wonder then that this city and state have been in the forefront of building unity around militant class battles that have reshaped and are reshaping our organized labor movement. We have been the pivotal center in forging the unity it took to win the Pittston coal strike, sending caravan after caravan of workers into the coal fields, as we have been doing for generations.

Three thousand strong, we marched through the Hopkins Airport, shouting slogans in support of the Eastern Airline workers. In the last national USX strike, the steelworkers in Lorain led the nation in militant battles. Our steelworkers' district director, who wore a taped bandage over his broken nose for many weeks after that battle, calls our Lorain steelworkers his shock troops.

When the mayor of a large industrial Cleveland suburb turned the police and fire forces from three cities loose on mass picketing by building trades unions, union firefighters refused to hose us down. And we did win that strike, even though some heads were broken, and 31 workers were jailed. The local judge ordered the company to negotiate with the unions and in the following election, we cleaned out the mayor and his administration and elected a pro-labor mayor and trade unionists to the City Council, on a pro-labor slate. We know what independent political action is because we practice it. No wonder then

that Cleveland and Ohio labor has long been known throughout the nation as a leader in political action.

We are not satisfied with past work. We're in the process of starting a critical examination of our political action, to strengthen our ability to build labor's political structure. Together we are determined that the prophecy of mine leader Richard Trumka will come true when he said that the '80s were theirs and the '90s will be ours.

Final word is that we know what unity is. We want a united Party in order to help us lead in these class struggles that we are involved in. We need a Party, a united Party, to fight. We need a Party based on Marxism-Leninism, to win. □

## Wally, Missouri

It is with great pleasure that I bring you greetings and a great sense of optimism from the state of Missouri.

In the state of Missouri we are able to look at this convention with great optimism because we are convinced that problems in a particular district may not necessarily have to be generalized as problems of the whole Party, and differences, if they are honest differences, can be resolved in a non-antagonistic manner within the context of the democratic process of this great organization. We have an incredible faith in the American working class that it will not allow this Party to be derailed by the State Department.

Let us be clear. There are so many slogans out there. Take democracy – democracy is a class concept. Brothers and sisters, slaveowners were denied the right to own slaves, they said it was undemocratic; but they had to be denied that right. In this organization we believe that every member has a lot of rights, but one of them is not the right to disrupt the Party.

I'll put it to you straight. For every revolution there is a counterrevolution, and for those of you who study Marxism-Leninism you need to study the history of counterrevolutions. Because what happened in the Soviet Union was not an accident. There are some people who would like to believe that everything went wrong because of the coup in August. I would like to ask them, did the vote in the United Nations – that racist vote on the side of imperialism, against the people of color in the Middle East – did that vote take place before or after the coup? I would like to ask them, did the abandonment of internationalism that led to renegeing on contractual obligations to Cuba begin after the coup or before the coup? I would like to ask them, did relationships warm up between some renegade elements in the Soviet Union and the fascist elements in South Africa after or before the coup?

So let us not deceive ourselves. Lenin once said, "Deception begins with self-deception." And we are not deceived. So brothers and sisters, I want to put it to you this way: we are optimistic that this convention will express what I call the voice of sanity, in the interest of the American working class. It will express the voice of reason, because it serves nobody but the class enemy to have

the Communist Party destroyed.

We are not afraid of ideas. We have never been. But when you begin to see concepts like the sovereignty of the individual; when you begin to see concepts like de-ideologizing foreign relations; when you begin to see concepts like, oh, what is the difference between socialism and capitalism; when you begin to see people raise questions in a manner that totally abandons the essence of partisanship, you know what it is that makes us different from anybody else. Anywhere else on the face of this earth, a victo-

ry for a section of the working class is our victory. We feel it in our bones and we feel a setback in our bones. How can you be blind to the liquidation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union?

Let me just end on this note. Somebody said Fidel has been in power too long, but you know the only ones saying it are the State Department. So the question that I would put to you is this: should Fidel Castro be replaced and disgraced so as to satisfy the rapacious greed of the State Department?

*Following are excerpts from the messages of a number of the fraternal parties:*

### ***Communist Party of Argentina***

We express our conviction that the only alternative to the present capitalist barbarism is the reaffirmation of the socialist horizon. We are convinced of the need to unite all revolutionary forces, to stand more effectively against imperialism, not only on the national level but also internationally. It is the task of all revolutionary forces in each country to find ways to improve coordination and decisions.

We express our sincere hope that our staunch solidarity with the Cuban Revolution will begin to reconstitute militant internationalism among all Communists and revolutionaries. We reaffirm our traditional friendship and ties of fellowship, reasserted in Marxism-Leninism and internationalism.

### ***Socialist Party of Australia***

Your Congress is at a time of unprecedented change and struggle throughout the world. The defeat of some socialist states has shifted the world balance of power temporarily in favor of imperialism. More than ever, this is a time when parties adhering to scientific socialism must take the initiative, countering the ideological attack of imperialism and giving guidance and support to the economic, political and social struggles of working people and their allies. We reject the assertion that communism is dead. Communism arises from the people. As long as there are poor and dispossessed there will be communists. Socialism remains the best and only system capable of meeting the needs of working people of all countries.

### ***Communist Party of Colombia***

It fills us with hope that the most advanced sections of the North American people maintain their anti-imperialist sentiments, and that the Communists of the United States assume with much valor and decisiveness the defense of the rights of the working people. For Latin Americans, this attitude is a noble expression of internationalism and of an untiring will to struggle.

### ***Progressive Party of Working People of Cyprus (AKEL)***

The Central Committee of AKEL extends to your convention its warm greetings and wishes for successful deliberations. AKEL considers that international solidari-

*Fraternal greetings and expressions of solidarity were received from 32 Communist and Workers Parties on the occasion of the 25th National Convention, CPUSA, held December 6-8, 1991 in Cleveland, Ohio.*

ty within the new context is needed today more than ever. The new world order must not use double standards aimed at further impoverishment of the poor nations. We shall continue struggling for peaceful solutions of the Cyprus problem, for the reunification of our Island and our people.

### ***Communist Party of France***

The French Communist Party sends a fraternal salute to the delegates of the 25th Convention of the CPUSA. In the present situation, solidarity and cooperation among all the progressive and revolutionary forces are more necessary than ever, in order to contribute to opening to all people new perspectives responding to their profound aspirations for peace, justice, liberty; to their social needs, to their hope for a better future.

### ***Party of Democratic Socialism, Germany (East)***

Though a great distance separates us, we feel a bond in solidarity with you in your conflict against the might of capital and in your struggle for equal rights and opportunities for everyone regardless of nationality, race or sex.

### ***German Communist Party, Germany (West)***

The topics you will discuss [at your Convention] are also the essence of our discussions—e.g., the analysis of imperialism, assuming that there are no longer any socialist countries in Europe; further examination of the demolition and breakup of socialism; consideration of strategy and tactics to counter the encroachment of the giant multinational corporations.

In our country, as a result of the total downfall of the Communist movement, we are forced to reorganize and to renew our position vis-a-vis other parties. Our party is convinced of the necessity to work with other parties. In this new world situation, it is of the utmost importance to exchange experiences and, whenever possible, to have joint actions of Communist parties. We assure you that the members of the DKP feel a strong fraternal bond with the Communists of the USA.

### ***Communist Party of Greece***

We would like to reiterate our high appreciation for the consistent struggle waged by your party under difficult and complex conditions, in defense of socialism, and in rebuffing the attempts of U.S. imperialism to impose its own "new world order" on the peoples of the world, and for your staunch solidarity with the liberation and progressive movement worldwide.

We are sure your 25th National Convention will further boost your struggle against the monopoly offensive,

in defense of the vital interests of the working class, of all working people in your country, as well as the achievement of world peace and security and the right of all people to choose their road of development.

### ***Hungarian Socialist Workers Party***

We extend best wishes to the 25th National Convention of your party. We hope your convention will contribute to the development of the Communist Party, USA to the successful solution of your tasks. The HSWP continues its fight for a democratic development of Hungary, for the right of workers and peasants. We express our solidarity with the Communists of the United States.

### ***Communist Party of India***

Members of our Party are closely following the activities of your Party and the broad democratic movements in your country, including those of the working class, trade unions, equality and peace movements and others, against the monopoly corporate offensive. In our country we are in the midst of a struggle to defend our sovereignty against U.S. imperialist onslaughts in the name of security and in the sphere of the economy. We hope your convention will make a valuable contribution to our common struggle.

### ***Communist Party of Israel***

We wish your convention fruitful deliberations in developing a program of struggle against the monopoly offensive, strengthening unity of all forces striving for the welfare of the working class and people, for peace, democracy and social progress.

### ***Workers Party of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea***

We warmly congratulate the 25th Convention of the CPUSA and through it all members of your party. The CPUSA has continued the struggle to maintain the revolutionary principle of the working class and defend the interests of the American people. We wish your convention great success in its work, with the belief that the good relations of friendship and cooperation between our two parties will further develop and strengthen.

### ***Communist Party of Norway***

The Congress of your Party takes place [when] there is a growing need for progressive ideas and revolutionary struggles to meet and defend the basic human and social rights of ordinary people [when] the big capitalist monopolies are on the offensive and so many newly converted market-economy prophets in the East European countries uncritically jump from one extreme to the other. Today it is important to strengthen communist parties against temptations to give up a revolutionary communist identity to accept more and more the market economy. We cannot give up our identity as a main opponent to the ruling ideology in the world economy to adjust ourselves to capitalism and imperialism.

### ***Portuguese Communist Party***

The PCP deeply appreciates the CPUSA's role, its tireless struggle to defend workers' interests, to fight racism and monopolist offensives, and its courageous stand against the imperialist policies of U.S. government circles. Bearing in mind the present situation in your country, as well as the momentous international situation, your convention will certainly assume an especial importance.

The existence of Communist Parties corresponds to a profound social demand for a revolutionary transformation of society. The PCP is convinced that problems, difficulties and demands for renewal faced by the international communist movement emphasize the communist ideal, the need to strengthen ties of solidarity and cooperation between Communist Parties, between all progressive forces. We confirm our profound interest in developing fraternal relations between the PCP and the CPUSA.

### ***Pakistan Socialist Party***

Best wishes for your 25th National Convention. Despite the severe test facing socialism in the former socialist bloc, the democratic people and working class of Pakistan remain convinced that socialism is the only way towards an era of world peace, social justice and development for all humanity. The contradiction between the working class and capitalists can only be resolved through the establishment of socialism. The working people of Pakistan look to the working people of America for support and leadership in this struggle to establish socialism. Long live their struggle for socialism.

### ***Philippine Communist Party***

U.S. Communists have always borne a special responsibility in our common struggles for liberation, social emancipation, democracy and socialism, fighting as they have been within the home base of the strongest and most aggressive imperialist power. Today we know that responsibility is greater than ever. Our Party has reasserted its absolute belief in socialism as its goal in the need for the national-democratic, anti-imperialist struggle of the Filipino people to be led by a reinvigorated Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. Our Party has always had internationalism inscribed on its banner and has greatly valued the international assistance and solidarity of the CPUSA from the time of PKP's founding in 1930 when the Philippines was a colony of U.S. imperialism. We believe the democratic forces of the Filipino and U.S. people, particularly through our two Parties, can together achieve the removal of neo-colonial domination from our country.

### ***Syrian Communist Party***

We send you best regards for the 25th National Convention. The 7th Congress of our Party in May 1991 reaffirmed its adherence to Marxism-Leninism as a method and a theory. We express our solidarity with your

struggle against the world hegemony of U.S. imperialism and its continuing attacks on the living standards of the U.S. people. We wish you all success.

### ***South African Communist Party***

The Central Committee of the SACP extends warm, fraternal greetings to the 25th Convention of the CPUSA.

With the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the demise of the Soviet Union, the unity in action of socialist, peace and democratic forces is of great significance. U.S. imperialism remains the main threat to building a world free from the scourge of war, poverty and ignorance.

In South Africa the SACP is involved in seeking to creatively develop the science of Marxism Leninism, taking into account new developments, both positive and negative. We shall strive to continue to build and strengthen our alliance with the ANC, COSATU and the mass democratic movement. We are seeking to help build a broad front to bring about, as speedily as possible, a non-racist, non-sexist democracy in our country.

May 1992 be the year in which both our parties become stronger and more influential.

### ***Communist Party of Vietnam***

Dear Comrade Gus Hall,

On the occasion of your re-election as National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, I would like to extend to you our warmest greetings.

I wish you good health and every success in your highly responsible assignment.

May the solidarity and friendship between the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Communist Party, U.S.A. be further consolidated and developed.

*Greetings were also received from Austria, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Sweden. In most cases there were messages from two parties in the same country.*

## 'Cuba will remain an example'

The 4th Party Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba deems it necessary to reflect upon some of the main aspects of the present world situation.

Since the 3rd Party Congress, the international event of greatest historical importance and most profound significance for the world revolutionary movement has been the process leading to the disappearance of the socialist states of Eastern Europe and to the weakening, almost to the point of disintegration, of the Soviet Union.

This political disaster has unleashed a process in which the most important realignment of global economic, political and military forces since the end of World War II has taken place. This is without a doubt this century's biggest setback for Communists, revolutionaries and all the peoples of the world.

Our Congress, for obvious reasons, has not carried out the exhaustive analysis demanded by these events and needed by our Party and people if we are to learn the lessons they contain. This constitutes a historical responsibility, still to be fulfilled, of the revolutionary movement to prevent the imposition of a rightist interpretation of these distressing events.

The analysis of the grave errors and causes leading to the present situation would naturally correspond, above all, to the Soviet Communists who, with their history of heroic deeds, gave the example of an accelerated construction of socialism, edifying a new society distinct from the dominant capitalist one, and who, at the head of the admirable peoples of the USSR liberated humanity from the threat of fascism.

The great multinational state was able not only to overcome this extraordinary challenge, but also to rebuild the country within a period of barely 15 years, create an enormous industrial power, maintain an exemplary internationalist policy and contribute decisively to the creation of a world balance of power in favor of the national liberation movement and the struggle for social emancipation.

The 4th Congress reiterates the position our Party has held since the beginning of these changes in the USSR and the European socialist countries of respecting their right to freedom of choice.

To the peoples of the USSR, with which we have maintained fraternal relations during three decades, we restate our disposition to foment, in the present circumstances and on the basis of the mutual respect that has always prevailed, the continuity of relations in all areas and by all possible means.

The nations of the Third World, and in a special way the people of Cuba, recognize the historical role the Soviet Union has played in the defense of our just aspirations. For this we hold a debt of infinite gratitude.

Foreign policy resolution adopted at the 4th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.

The events of the last three years have given rise to a unipolar world which finds expression in the military hegemony of the United States.

A new reality has emerged. The Soviet army began unilaterally withdrawing troops from the countries of Eastern Europe. The Warsaw Pact disappeared, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization remained whole and the United States continues with its Strategic Defense Initiative. All of this is taking place under the aegis of theories on the supposed disappearance of class struggle at the international level and on the so-called culling of ideology from international relations.

The Gulf War was decisive in the consolidation of this military and political unipolarity, its pretext being the grave political error committed by Iraq when it invaded, occupied and annexed Kuwait with its armies. This event helped realize the U.S. aspiration of installing its troops in the region.

Carefully prepared by its General Staff, the U.S. attack, which guaranteed its military presence in such a vital region, was fully exploited by the governing circles in the United States, to give a spectacular show of force and technological supremacy in armaments, with the aim of intimidating the whole world.

**IMPERIALIST RIVALRIES** ■ Meanwhile, the world economy is also showing the tendency to consolidate in large economic bloc or areas, bringing together within these groups or through links between members, the main currents of commerce, investment, credit and technological innovation. The existence of these blocs, one of them formed by the United States, another made up of the countries of the European Community, and a third comprising Japan and the countries within its sphere of economic influence, increasingly marginalizes the developing nations. It creates the urgent need for the unity and economic integration of these nations, while generating more and more contradictions between the three poles, or blocs of countries.

The U.S. economy continues to be the most important at the international level, but its real strength is far from giving it the same preponderance in the economic sphere as it enjoys in the military sphere.

Following a prolonged expansion between late 1982 and 1990, the U.S. economy has entered a new recession that is proving to be deeper than the government originally assured. But beyond conjunctural trends, that economy has structural problems that explain its lagging performance in the race with the other rival economic blocs, indicated by its falling profit rate, the surge of speculation and stock market investments, the low level of domestic savings, the generalized increasing debt and the trade deficit.

There is a strenuous economic dispute going on between the three economic blocs. This is expressed in phenomena such as, among others, the growing penetration of Japanese capital into the United States, U.S. pressures on Japan to open more of its economy, the protectionist agricultural policy of the European Community and U.S. pressures to reverse this policy in order to make use of its competitive edge in agricultural products.

One basic characteristic of the present world economy is the widening breach between developed and underdeveloped countries.

With more intensity now than ever before, the Third World is the object of exploitation and plunder resulting from the prevailing unjust international economic order. The foreign debt, inequitable terms of trade, protectionism, instability of interest rates and of exchange rates for various currencies are all factors that deepen the gap between one group of countries and the other.

The Third World, home to more than four billion people, at the end of 1990 had a foreign debt of over 1.3 trillion dollars, generating costs for debt servicing of over 1.6 billion dollars for that year alone. For this group of countries, where the average life expectancy is barely over 50, where the infant mortality rate is 76 for every thousand live births, and where 40 percent of the population is illiterate, the foreign debt continues to be the most inhuman instrument of plunder and of imposition of neo-liberal policies. This debt, as Comrade Fidel has been saying since 1985, is unpayable, and continues to act, especially in Latin America, as the factor generating a considerable transfer of funds toward developed countries, making the region a new exporter of capital, rather than providing it with the financing it needs.

The application of neo-liberal economic policies is the predominant practice in underdeveloped countries today. This reinforces ties of dependency on the one hand, while making poverty more acute on the other. This increases the risk of social explosions, all of which proves the incapacity of capitalism to resolve the serious problems of the most backward nations of the planet.

**LATIN AMERICAN** ■ In evaluating the political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the 4th Congress highlighted the importance of the First Ibero-American Summit held in Guadalajara. The meeting of heads of state was an important step on the road toward integration of the countries on our continent. That it took place without the presence of the United States, clearly showed our common identity and our will to advance together toward the integration necessary to reach true independence, allowing us to assume our rightful place in the world of today and of tomorrow.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are equal to this unifying initiative, despite the difficulties they are going through. The factors that bring us together today were expressed 100 years ago by Jose Marti in his famous essay *Nuestra America* (Our America). The common language, the historical traditions and the culture

that unite us, as well as the common problems that affect us, create conditions favorable to this necessary unity.

It is true that the integration process begun in the 19th century by men such as Simon Bolivar and Jose Marti has not had many results so far. But integration is the only means left to the peoples of the Third World; in fact, it is an inevitable road for "Our America" if we are to advance. To do this, we will have to transform the poverty of its consumers into a veritable internal market. This can only be achieved through social development programs similar to those applied in Cuba, though they may not necessarily mean socialism as is the case in our country.

We have to begin, as we have been seeing recently, by regional and sub-regional agreements, that can become broader and broader channels for Latin America's economic integration. All the accumulated experiences, and even more importantly, the unexploited potential of our countries, reveal the existing possibilities and underscore the need for integration.

The 4th Congress reaffirms our country's vocation of integration and cooperation with the rest of Latin America, and reiterates the position expressed by President Fidel Castro in Guadalajara to the effect that we could offer preferential terms to Latin American investors with the aim of favoring this process.

As Fidel said in his address at the First Ibero-American Summit, what is missing is "the will to join together in the effort to confront all the situations that oppress our peoples. If we can begin to respond to these calls for help, by first of all continuing the contact we are now establishing, we will have fulfilled the main goal of this meeting...."

Cuba's policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean is based on these positions.

Beyond the effort toward necessary continental integration, the 4th Congress reaffirms the will of the Communist Party of Cuba, to continue fighting for the unity of all the so-called Third World countries. Present circumstances create the need for the organizations representing under-developed countries to become much stronger than they are, not weaker.

Such is the case of the Non-Aligned Movement. It emerged in 1961 as an outcome of the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and for peace, independence and development in the context of two antagonistic military blocs. Today one of these blocs has disappeared, but the imperialist and neo-colonialist policies that limit or subordinate the sovereignty of our nations persist. Rather than solutions being found to the economic conditions of exploitation and oppression of underdeveloped nations, this situation is getting worse.

**INTERNATIONALISM** ■ Fulfilling our internationalist duties, Cuban science workers, doctors, engineers, agronomists, teachers and researchers now work in 32 countries, bringing Cuba's technology and experience to our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and Latin America. More than 2,000 doctors and medical workers



share the responsibility of improving health standards in the underdeveloped world. At the same time, tens of thousands of students from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America have either graduated from or are presently studying in the schools of the Isle of Youth and in Cuban technological schools and universities. This training constitutes for Cuba a revolutionary duty of solidarity and a legitimate source of satisfaction.

The 4th Congress expresses its pride in the relations of cooperation established by the Revolution with the countries of Africa and Asia, and underlines our people's will to continue alongside these countries in the fight for development and political and economic independence.

It reiterates the unalterable revolutionary, anti-imperialist, solidarity and internationalist nature of our foreign policy, and its orientation of unity with and fraternal respect for the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who have, with Cuba, chosen the road of socialism.

The Congress considers still accurate the policy of the Revolution since its outset to not only seek ties with Third World countries, but to remain open to trade and cooperation with industrialized capitalist countries. Consequently, we see the need to extend and deepen, on mutually beneficial terms, our country's relations with the European Economic Community and all the other nations on that continent, as well as with Canada and Japan.

**PEACE** ■ Cuba confirms its aspirations for peace: true peace, valid for all nations, big or small, weak or powerful; peace for the world, peace for our region, peace for our people.

The aspiration fits with our position vis-a-vis the Nuclear Armaments Non-Proliferation Treaty with regard to the attitude of those who give themselves the right to possess the atomic bomb and threaten us with it, going as far as carrying it on the ships that land on the usurped territory of the Guantanamo naval base; of those who are converting colonized Puerto Rico into a nuclear base. We refuse to allow them to make us renounce the arms they flaunt and with which they threaten us. The Congress nevertheless authenticates the declaration that, for the sake of Latin American unity, Cuba is prepared to assume the obligations of the Tlatelolco Treaty the day Latin America unanimously assumes them.

The Congress once again makes clear the full solidarity of Cuban Communists with all revolutionary, progressive and democratic forces, and with all organizations and persons wherever they be who fight for the peace, independence and sovereignty of nations, with those who struggle for equality among human beings, with those who support conservation of the environment, and with all those who strive for a more just and dignified world.

The 4th Congress recognizes and values highly the support shown by various governments, non-governmental organizations, political movements of widely varying

denominations, public figures, trade unions, social and popular movements, Christian groups and many others who are expressing their solidarity with Cuba at this exceptional time in our history.

The Congress highlights that the glorious internationalist mission, carried out by our troops in Angola, led to negotiations which ended successfully in agreements that guaranteed the security of that country, favored the independence of Namibia and contributed to the beginning of the breakdown of apartheid. This process proved beyond doubt Cuba's disposition to contribute to the solution of regional problems through negotiation and to honor the terms agreed upon.

Our meeting also brings out Cuba's proven vocation and commitment to participating in a constructive manner, through the United Nations and other international forums, in the search for solutions to contemporary world problems, including the eradication of colonialism and the establishment of the New International Economic Order, in the effort to resolve regional conflicts and misunderstandings by political means, and for the continual strengthening of peace.

Cuba will keep working for the democratization of the UN so that its main bodies, particularly the Security Council, now arbitrarily manipulated by the United States, may act in the interests of all the members of the organization and guarantee the rights and security of all peoples, on the basis of strict respect of the principles of the San Francisco Charter.

**ECONOMIC BLOCKADE** ■ Present international circumstances have given rise to a new phenomenon: the attempt to universally impose a single political and social model. With no other options permitted, the adoption of the multi-party paradigm in politics is demanded with increasing intransigence accompanied by a capitalist design of neo-liberal description, re-baptized as market economy. The failure to adhere to this dogma, demanded moreover with a marked selectivity, serves as a pretext to judge, discriminate against and isolate any one of our countries.

Under various pretexts alien to international law, there is an attempt to create uniformity among the many diverse states and peoples that form the community of nations, and to impose a new type of relationship in which the principles of sovereignty and national independence are defaced.

The Congress of Cuban Communists reaffirms that respect for these principles and for the right of nations to determine for themselves the model of economic, social and political development of their choice, should form the steadfast basis for international relations, particularly in present circumstances where the preeminence of a single country seeks to condition this self-determination.

**SOCIALISM** ■ Our Congress also reiterates the Communist Party of Cuba's conviction that the search for alternatives, based on a non-dogmatic application of

Marxism-Leninism - taking into account the history, idiosyncrasies and level of development of each nation, as well as the prevailing international circumstances - retains validity for the workers and the people of underdeveloped countries.

This is the option that objectively makes possible the break from a heritage of backwardness, oppression, inequality and exploitation and the establishment of a fully democratic system.

The 4th Congress equally rejects the distorted interpretations and political manipulations that discriminate against Third World nations by imposing a particular view of human rights. The very same dominant economic powers that prevent our countries from attaining even the most basic economic and social rights, claim to impose and unacceptably enforce their own models of behavior in this sensitive area.

The 4th Congress finally reaffirms the steadfast position of our Communist Party to defend the full independence and national sovereignty of Cuba.

We have heroically resisted more than 30 years of aggressions, blockade and hostilities on the part of successive U.S. administrations. These days the United States is becoming even more aggressive. Intensification of the economic blockade has become an important part of ideological warfare. Efforts are being made to foment an internal counterrevolutionary movement and to unite groups outside the country. Attempts to blackmail, menace and carry out a campaign of misinformation and blackening our country's image, scaring away trade and investment and demobilizing international solidarity with our cause, are becoming more forceful. In these circumstances, with more strength than ever, we underscore the firm and unanimous will of Cuban Communists to defend the nation and the Socialist Revolution at any price, with the conviction that this is the decision of our people.

During the last decade, and particularly since the disappearance of the socialist bloc, attempts to strangle us economically have reached obsessive levels in the present U.S. administration. The virtual approval of the Mack Amendment by the U.S. Congress, which would bring the blockade back to pre-1975 levels by prohibiting once again all forms of trade between U.S. subsidiaries in third countries and Cuba, and in addition the new economic

restrictions imposed on relations with the Cuban community in the United States, and the rising pressures on our trade partners to cut ties with Cuba, are some of the most recent manifestations of this policy which has cost our country more than 15 billion dollars over the last three decades.

The 4th Congress warns the nations and governments of the world particularly those of Latin America and the Caribbean of the incalculable consequences that could result from this policy that leads, step by step, to more adventurous and more direct aggressions.

The Congress demands an end to the criminal U. S. blockade against Cuba and the return of the territory occupied by the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo.

At the same time we confirm the still applicable affirmation of our Platform which says that we will "continue to be open to resolving the historical dispute in bilateral relations with the United States provided this be based on strict respect of our independence and sovereignty and on complete adherence to the principle of equality among nations."

**THE WORLD HAS CHANGED** ■ Today the enemies of the people feel more powerful than ever before. But the true power, the one that will never be defeated, is the people's wish for independence, freedom and development. The duty of all revolutionaries continues to be making the revolution; making the revolution and defending it.

Our Party, government and people will never fall into the trap of unilateral concessions, be they big or small, for as history has shown, they lead inevitably to defeat or to surrender to imperialism.

As the basic principle governing our foreign policy, the 4th Congress takes up once again the words of Comrade Fidel: "We will never yield to imperialist demands and blackmail. We do not pursue chauvinist interests. We do not barter with our international policy. We are prepared to resist in a dignified and self-denying manner for as many years as the U.S. blockade lasts. If others give in, if others let themselves be bought off, if others betray, Cuba will know how to remain the example of a revolution that does not give in, that does not sell itself, that does not surrender and that does not go down on its knees." □

## The way forward for South Africa

The balance of world power has changed very rapidly in the last three years. A balance of forces built around two major power blocs, centered on the United States and the Soviet Union, emerged after the Second World War. This two-bloc world system has now more or less collapsed. The imperialist world, led by the United States, has emerged more powerful and confident.

Generally, these developments are not favorable for progressive forces within our own country and, indeed, internationally.

Any attempt to analyze this crisis needs to base itself, in the first place, on the enormous objective difficulties confronting the socialist project in these countries. Tsarist Russia was the most backward European power at the turn of the century. Socialism in the Soviet Union had to be built in an exceptionally harsh and hostile environment. The new workers' state was compelled to chart a course in the context of a low productive base, mass illiteracy, imperialist invasion, counter-revolution and famine.

From 1948 the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, themselves exceptionally backward societies that had been ravaged by the Second World War, were confronted by an aggressive imperialism. The imperialist powers unleashed the cold war, and spent billions of dollars on destabilization in an effort to "roll back" socialism.

But the awesome difficulties cannot in any way justify the criminal violations of social justice, and the stifling bureaucratic, administrative command systems that evolved. The crisis in Eastern Europe underlines one important truth: It is not possible to sustain and develop socialism in an authoritarian environment.

In many of these societies the relationship and differences between the ruling party and the state; the party, state and elected representatives of the people; the party, state and trade unions and other social organizations, were blurred and collapsed. Civil society was absorbed into the ambit of party and state politics.

But a thriving socialism requires a whole network of mass democratic formations and organs of popular power. It is only the working masses, organized and mobilized in a wide variety of independent organizations, who can build and sustain a democratic socialist system.

Nevertheless, despite serious weaknesses, positive results were achieved in the socialist countries. In many respects they pioneered the 8-hour working day, free and comprehensive education for all, an affordable public health system, women's equality, full employment and subsidized holidays for workers and their families. It was the Soviet working people who bore the brunt of the Nazi war, and who, at tremendous cost, turned the tide of that

war, saving the whole of humanity from possible domination by fascism. And it was the Soviet Union that for decades proved to be a pillar of solidarity for our own liberation struggle and for countless other anti-colonial and anti-imperialist forces.

Whatever the weaknesses of socialism in Eastern Europe, the new capitalist dispensation that is rapidly emerging in many of these countries is bringing little joy to the working majority. Millions of East European workers are now unemployed and they face a bleak future. Women are often the worst hit, and with mass retrenchments and the closing down of publicly funded childcare facilities and canteens they are being driven back into the kitchen. This period has seen the emergence of fascist, racist and national chauvinist forces. But the struggle in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is far from over. The harsh realities of capitalism will take their toll. The distorted form of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has collapsed, but genuine socialist forces are already beginning to reassert themselves. The main force for the progress of humanity remains the transition from capitalism to socialism.

**THE ADVANCED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES** ■ There are also important shifts occurring within and between the major imperialist powers. There are now three major centers of capitalist accumulation—North America, centered on the US; western Europe, with Germany acting as its economic power-house and the Pacific Rim, centered on Japan.

In the last decade the relative economic power of these centers is shifting to the disadvantage of the US and in favor of the other two major imperialist centers. The US still remains the most powerful capitalist economy. But Japan and Germany, mainly because they were unfettered by the enormous burden of military spending that the US has taken upon itself, have begun to make significant inroads into the previous US economic domination.

Capitalism in the advanced imperialist countries has proven to be more resilient, more capable of weathering the enormous structural crises into which it has periodically plunged in the twentieth century, than most Marxists originally imagined. Nevertheless, neither its resilience, nor the present crisis of socialism, should blind us to the massive failures of capitalism.

In the advanced capitalist countries 40 million people are unemployed, 100 million live in poverty. In the United States, 3 million people live on the streets, and over 35 million people out of a population of nearly 250 million live in poverty. Wages and social conditions for the US working class have been deteriorating for a period of twenty years. Dire poverty strikes unevenly, with Black Americans particularly disadvantaged. One quarter of all Black US males between the ages of 19 and 30 are now

The following are excerpts from the main political resolution of the South African Communist Party Congress, held December 5 to 8, 1991

either in jail or are being processed by the criminal justice system.

Monopoly capitalism has had considerable success in maintaining its political rule in these societies. It has not, however, been able to suppress working class and broad social and political movements which continue to struggle for social justice and peace. Class and popular struggles, taking a variety of forms, will always be a feature of capitalist society. In view of the unfavorable balance of forces internationally, it is more crucial than ever that South African communists and our broad democratic movement support these struggles and identify common principles and goals with progressive forces in the advanced capitalist countries.

**THE THIRD WORLD** ■ It is in the global backyard of imperialism, in the third world, that the failures of capitalism are most obvious.

The countries of the third world, in which the great majority of the world's population lives, have various political and social dispensations. Some openly declare their commitment to capitalism. Others camouflage their capitalism under various names. Still others are genuinely attempting to pursue a progressive path broadly beneficial to the masses. But whatever their political orientation, all are the victims of an imperialist world division of power and wealth. Virtually all are under the domination of the transnationals, the International Monetary Fund, and the constant threat of US military and political destabilization. In the new world order this imperialist domination is increasing.

The gap between the imperialist centers and the third world has not only persisted over the last decade, but for most third world countries it has widened.

The major reason for the plight of third world countries is the crippling drain of wealth out of these countries, to the transnational corporations and banks of the rich capitalist countries. The advanced capitalist countries have manipulated world markets to ensure that the world price of most commodities exported by third world countries has steadily declined. At the same time the prices of commodities which the third world is forced to purchase from the advanced capitalist countries have shot up.

The foreign debt of third world countries has grown dramatically over the last decade. In fact, it has now reached such proportions that it is unpayable. The effect of all of these factors is that the third world, which urgently needs capital, has been a net exporter of capital for the past decade. It is estimated that between \$70 and \$100 billion a year is being sucked out of these poverty ridden countries by the rich imperialist powers. In Africa between 1980 and 1986 \$40 billion was paid to the industrialized world.

There are, of course, many differences in levels of development and wealth among third world countries. In some there is virtually no modern industrial infrastructure. In other countries, sometimes called "semi-peripheral" societies, there is a relatively advanced and relatively

extensive capitalist infrastructure (including a significant industrial proletariat) combined with many features of typical third world underdevelopment. Societies with those contradictory features include Brazil, South Korea and South Africa.

It is no accident that these countries, occupying a particular and contradictory position within the imperialist world division of labor, have been the sites of some of the most intense mass and working-class struggles in the 1980s. In some respects, these societies constitute a weak link in the world imperialist chain.

**NEW WORLD CHALLENGES** ■ There is no doubt that the changed international balance of power makes this a harsher and more difficult world for the majority of its inhabitants. Emboldened by the new situation the imperialist powers with the United States in the lead are attempting to impose a so-called new world order. They are evermore brazenly trying to impose their will using military aggression and economic, political and ideological pressures. Intense pressure is also being mounted on socialist countries. The efforts of those socialist countries, among them Cuba, to consolidate socialism and to take on board the lessons of the distortions which have led to the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union must be supported by progressive forces worldwide.

The pressures of the peace forces throughout the world saw the 1980s ushering in the end of the cold war. This opened up possibilities for peaceful resolution of regional and internal conflicts. This also diminished the threat of a nuclear holocaust and led to the process of limiting the arms race.

But there are also new threats to the survival of human civilization. The most serious of these is the destruction of our environment. Voracious and uncontrolled capitalist, as well as short-sighted bureaucratic socialist exploitation of our natural resources, has inflicted major damage to the world's ecological system. Urgent measures and worldwide international cooperation is imperative.

There are other major international problems - hunger, disease, including the dramatic and deadly spread of the AIDS virus. These, too, require effective worldwide cooperation and well-funded collective action.

Today our class enemies are crowing over the crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Imperialists, free marketeers, the izimbongi of private profit and class exploitation, are all proclaiming socialism "a thing of the past." But it is these bosses and their lackeys who belong to the past. It is they who have no real answers to the real challenges of the 1990s.

Can they please explain to us how the free market, how private capitalists, each pursuing their own selfish interests, will solve the AIDS crisis, or hunger, homelessness and unemployment or the threat to our environment? If capitalism is the answer, then why is the most powerful and the most wealthy capitalist country on earth, the United States, so incapable of providing the

most basic human needs to all its people? And what answer does imperialism have to the widening gap that it itself is causing between the advanced first world countries and the impoverished third world?

At this time of crisis in the socialist world, the need for international solidarity becomes more pressing than ever. The SACP pledges itself to spare no effort in helping to bring together other Communist Parties and all left and democratic forces to share problems and perspectives on the current period and the way forward.

Capitalism has failed humanity. The reins of economic and political power must be placed under the democratic ownership and control of the working people of the world. Until such time, our world will continue to be a world of plenty in the midst of mass hunger, disease and poverty.

**SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW POLITICAL REALITIES** ■ The new political situation in our country is the result of major developments and a changed balance of forces internationally, within the southern African region, and inside South Africa itself. These changes are complex and contradictory in character. They contain, in different measure, positive and negative features.

Internationally the deep crisis of the world socialist system, has had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on our own struggle. The imperialist bloc is, as we have noted, now more powerful, confident and aggressive. On the other hand (partly linked to the end of the old two bloc, Cold War, world system), there is now a worldwide tendency to settle regional conflicts through political negotiation, and to make relatively peaceful transitions towards greater democracy in formerly highly anti-democratic countries. Imperialism and its local allies hope to use and dominate these transitional processes with a view to stabilizing the world capitalist system. However, progressive forces in various parts of the world, including our own, are engaging with these transitional processes as a new terrain of struggle. The present process underway in South Africa has many significant international parallels.

Regionally virtually all the independent states of southern Africa are in deep crisis. In some cases this crisis has been sharpened by the difficulties of trying to build socialism from an underdeveloped economic base. On occasion subjective errors by the revolutionary forces contributed to the difficulties.

The support and sacrifices of the progressive states of southern Africa, to the liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have been of great significance.

But the major factor in the regional crisis, overshadowing everything else, has been the Pretoria-led and imperialist-backed war of destabilization. However, the apartheid regime has also paid a high price in conducting this war, and its ability to sustain the war was increasingly being eroded. By 1988 a significant change in the military balance of forces started to emerge in southern Angola. In many ways, the opening of the present phase

within our country and within our region begins, not on February 2, 1990, but in August 1988 when combined Cuban, Angolan and SWAPO forces delivered a major military defeat to the apartheid army at Cuito Cuanavale.

Within South Africa – the rolling wave of popular mass struggles, the armed struggle and international pressure over the last decades have resulted in sustained growth in the organization, popularity and power of the liberation movement. These struggles also greatly deepened the international isolation and the internal crisis and splits within the white ruling bloc. By the end of the 1980s various factors, both positive and negative in international, regional and national situations, created a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement in South Africa.

It is the combination of these factors which has produced the present political situation within our country. It is a situation in which democratic change through negotiation has become possible.

The apartheid region now openly concedes that it cannot continue to rule in the same way. This has resulted in significant, if partial victories, for the national liberation movement:

- The unbanning of the ANC, SACP and other organizations;
- The release of many, although not all, political prisoners;
- The return of many exiles;
- The scrapping of cornerstone apartheid laws.

However the process of democratization is not irreversible – state power remains in the hands of the white minority; parliament, the judiciary, the bureaucracy and the commanding heights of the army, air force, navy, police and prison services are all monopolized by the white minority. It is this white minority state apparatus that remains the major obstacle to change, and the principal immediate enemy of the national liberation movement. The only real guarantee that the process of transition is not reversed, lies in continued organized mass mobilization, and all-round pressure on the regime.

The depth and quality of democratic change is also at stake in the present situation. In fact, the struggle over the character and content of the change is the main feature of the present political situation. In many ways it is a struggle for tactical and strategic initiative. Whoever captures the strategic initiative will best be able to steer the process of change.

For its part, the regime, backed by the capitalist ruling class, hopes to manage a process of change that will stabilize and lend legitimacy to a South Africa in which existing minority power and privilege are minimally affected, and, above all, in which the capitalist order is not threatened. To this end, they have developed an economic strategy designed to unilaterally restructure the economy, in order to safeguard accumulated privileges of big capital. Amongst other things, this strategy includes privatization

and restructuring the tax system to shift the burden even more onto the working class.

The present ruling bloc hopes that by conceding basic civil rights it will block the advance of the wider national democratic revolution of our country. To accomplish this, the regime needs, for the moment, to negotiate with the ANC-led alliance. But at the same time it seeks to split the tripartite alliance, weaken the ANC and the broad mass forces. Amongst the weapons it is deploying in this double agenda are:

- Violence – both indiscriminate violence to sow terror and confusion, to provoke ethnic rivalries and disorganize the broad masses, as well as targeted violence to eliminate key activists;
- Disinformation – to provoke demoralization in our ranks;
- Fostering and projecting black puppets and political formations to counter-balance the ANC – in particular Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha;
- Anti-communism – with the intention of splitting the ANC, of distancing the ANC from its alliance with the SACP and of transforming the ANC into a reformist body.

In maintaining its onslaught against the ANC alliance the regime has several options in mind. They are, in descending order of preference from its point of view:

- Rendering the ANC more or less irrelevant, and allowing an NP-led bloc of forces to win elections;
- Alternately, forcing the ANC into some kind of power-sharing government of national unity with the NP and Inkatha;
- Or, failing the above, at least ensuring that a future ANC-dominated government is relatively weak and severely hamstrung.

But there is no reason why the regime should succeed in any of these objectives. A militant, well organized, mass-based ANC-led alliance, acting with clear strategic purpose can seize and maintain the strategic initiative in the present situation.

**NEGOTIATIONS** ■ We have entered negotiations because they may offer the shortest and most peaceful route for the transfer of power to the people. Our participation in negotiations does not rule out the use of any forms of struggle, in principle or in the long term, if negotiations do not offer a path to the transfer of power to the people.

Negotiations are a terrain of struggle. Power in negotiations is derived from outside the negotiating forums, in particular through the creation of centers of real power on the ground. For the regime this means the maintenance of control by the repressive apparatus and the system of local authorities. For the liberation movement this means

the strengthening of the power of mass organizations as alternative sources of power in townships, the rural areas and the factories.

Central to our understanding of negotiations is the concept of strategic initiative. This is the ability by one side in the negotiations to determine and control the pace and direction of the negotiating process.

The SACP's immediate demands are for an interim government of national unity to prepare the way for a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of one person one vote.

Our aim must be to ensure that the process of democratization is made irreversible. This means that the immediate issue under negotiation – a new democratic constitution and non-racial elections – must open up, not close down, a process of ongoing political, economic and social empowerment of the working masses of our country.

A new democratic constitution and elections will not on their own mark the achievement of national democratic change, let alone socialism. But they can open the door to a more or less prolonged phase of national democratic transformation, in which political, social and economic power is increasingly transferred (through ongoing mobilization, organization and struggle) to the people of our country. Only such a process can put an end to the accumulated effects of centuries of colonial dispossession and racial oppression.

**THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS** ■ The South African capitalist economy is grossly skewed and uneven in character. It combines features of a relatively advanced capitalist economy with many of the characteristics of dire third world underdevelopment. This uneven character of the economy has everything to do with the particular South African path of capitalist development pursued over the last 80 years.

It is a path which our Party has conceptualized as colonialism of a special type. This is a variant of bourgeois rule in which the essential features of colonial domination in the imperialist epoch have been maintained and even intensified, but within the boundaries of a single country.

Colonial, semi-colonial and neo-colonial rule have all been forms of bourgeois domination exerted across frontiers. Colonialism of a special type is a variant of this general species of bourgeois domination. It is a variant in which an increasingly powerful local capitalist ruling class with its wider white support base on the one hand, and the nationally oppressed black majority on the other, have been located within a single country and within a single economic formation.

Colonialism of a special type has evolved the use of political power by a multi-class alliance within the white minority to promote a particular variant of capitalist development, and to foster the economic interests of this minority at the expense of the majority.

**THE WAY FORWARD** ■ Our party's objective of building a socialist South Africa reflecting the aspirations of the working class calls for both an immediate and a longer

term perspective.

The immediate objective of the SACP is the transfer of power to the people, so that they can begin the process of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. The main content of this national democratic revolution is the liberation of the African people in particular, and the Black people in general. These immediate objectives we share with our allies in the tripartite alliance (the ANC and COSATU), and with an even broader range of democratic forces. The broad outlines of these objectives are enshrined in the Freedom Charter.

For the SACP the national democratic revolution is not a delaying tactic or a side-track from our longer-term socialist objectives. In the first place, real national democratic change will represent a major victory for the people of our country, and above all, for the working class.

Secondly, in the concrete conditions of our country, national democratic transformation holds out the prospect for the most rapid and direct advance to socialism. A thoroughgoing process of national democratic change, and the broad range of popular forces that are and must continue to be mobilized behind this objective, constitute a major weapon in the struggle to loosen the stranglehold that the capitalist class exerts over our country's entire destiny.

But from the point of view of the working class it is not enough just to commit ourselves to the general objectives of national democratic change. The depth and quality of these changes are critical.

In the first place, it is crucial that national democratic transformation is not limited within a narrow legalistic and constitutional framework. The scrapping of all racist laws, a new democratic constitution, and the holding of one-person, one-vote elections will represent an important victory for the people of our country – not least the working class.

But these important democratic measures will only mark the very first steps in the long and difficult path of national democratic transformation. The objective of such a transformation must be the overcoming of the accumulated effects of three centuries of colonial conquest and dispossession, and over one century of capitalism.

Ownership, occupation and use of land requires radical readjustment. Large tracts of land owned by big landlords or the state, some of it used by the SADF, are not being used productively, while millions are land-starved. Affirmative action is urgently needed by the state to redress landlessness.

The Party demands the redistribution of all unused land so that the people in both rural and urban areas will be able to build homes, grow food and contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the country.

Anti-monopoly legislation must be strengthened and implemented vigorously so as to prevent a strangulation of the economy through price fixing, production controls, cartels and deliberate economic contraction with consequent job losses.

In the struggle for national democratic revolution, the

SACP commits itself to the fullest possible emancipation of women. The party recognizes that women's emancipation is not confined to legal rights, but must also involve redressing cultural, ideological, political and economic disabilities.

The only class force capable of leading our country in the fulfillment of these tasks is the working class. The SACP and the progressive trade unions, in particular, have a major responsibility to ensure that workers are active, effective and powerfully present on all fronts of struggle. We must guard against other class forces hijacking and curtailing the process of national democratic revolution.

**THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM** ■ The possibility of a transition to socialism will be greatly enhanced if we achieve four crucial objectives within the national democratic phase of struggle itself:

- The building and strengthening of an independent vanguard Party of the working class;
- The development of a vast network of democratic organs of popular participation in both the economy and the political system under the leadership of the working class;
- The restructuring of the state so as to establish state apparatus shaped to relate directly and continuously with these popular structures; and
- A decisive increase of the sectors of the economy under social control and subject to democratic planning. In other words, a decisive weakening of the capitalist economy which is driven by exploitation and by the pursuit of profit, rather than the needs of the people.

It is the development of these institutions of popular democracy to a position of dominance in all spheres – political, economic, social and cultural – which constitutes the core of the socialist system for which we are struggling.

Within such a system, political and civil liberties (like multi-party democracy, a justifiable bill of rights, an independent judiciary and the basic freedoms of speech, association, worship and press) will be guaranteed. What is more, they will no longer be warped and distorted by the deep inequalities of wealth and power so characteristic of capitalism.

Within such a socialist dispensation, the people's participation will not be restricted to the right to periodic votes for political representatives in a multi-party democracy. Through a series of sectoral and communal organizations, the people of our country should increasingly have a direct say in all aspects of their lives – their work, their education, their recreation, their neighborhood, their environment.

Under socialism the rudimentary organs of popular power (street and township committees, village committees, trade union locals, etc.) that emerged in struggle in the mid-1980s, should be greatly extended and they

should increasingly have an institutionalized right and opportunity to participate in the running of our country.

Within such a system the economy will fall increasingly under social control. But we do not see control of the means of production as a mere question of legal ownership. There is no socialism where all the means of production are owned by a state run by a small circle of bureaucrats, without the democratic participation by the actual producers and consumers at all levels of the economy.

This democratic participation is compatible with various forms of ownership of the means of production. These include state, municipal, collective, cooperative and small-scale, non-exploitative family-owned enterprises. In other words, state ownership (or nationalization) is neither sufficient, nor is it necessarily always the only or most effective form of socialist ownership.

The model of socialism that we develop in a future South Africa will be our own South African model, evolved from our own conditions. In building on our traditions and within our own conditions, we will, of course, learn from the negative and positive lessons from around the world.

**THE ROLE OF THE SACP** ■ The SACP's basic role is to be the leading political force of the South African working class. The SACP aims to organize, educate and lead the working class both in the immediate struggle for national liberation, and in the longer term struggle for socialism. The ultimate aim of the Party is the building of a communist society, that is, a society of abundance, a society finally free of all class oppression and exploitation.

To fulfill this function in the present situation, the SACP needs to be a relatively large, vanguard party with a disciplined and activist membership.

In the process of rebuilding after 40 years of illegality, the SACP needs to be strategically organized, in the first place, among the industrial working class of our country. It is this component of the wider working class that is, generally speaking, the best organized, which has the most revolutionary traditions, and which is most strategically placed to spearhead the struggle for democracy and socialist transformation.

At the same time the Party must not neglect to build among the wider sections of our working class, among the rural masses, among our militant youth and students, and among all socialist inclined forces.

In working to organize and empower the working class of our country, the Party pays particular attention to the task of working-class cadre development. In branch education, in regional and national workshops, in open forums, through our Party publications, and through the development of night schools, the Party seeks to deepen working-class consciousness, build all-round political skills, and foster an understanding of scientific socialism. In this way, the Party not only builds its own working-class cadre, but helps to build working class leadership in all the mass formations of our struggle.

Working-class internationalism is another hallmark of

the SACP. The SACP seeks to link the struggles within our own country to working-class struggles in our region, in our continent and internationally. The SACP seeks to strengthen working class and international cooperation and unity between all communist, socialist and broad left forces. The world-wide revitalization of the struggle for socialism requires open dialogue and comradely criticism between the widest range of forces broadly committed to the socialist vision.

The SACP has always played an important theoretical role in its own right, and in the context of the wider national democratic struggle. The Party and all its members should collectively seek to continuously develop and deepen the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, and in particular, to develop its application to our own society. Increasingly the Party's theoretical work must be elaborated, not just as an analysis of society, but also as a guide to practice, and specifically, as a guide to concrete policy development in the transformation within our country.

The SACP seeks to act as the leading socialist formation within our country. It does this, not by dominating or excluding other left forces, nor by self-proclamation, but by force of example, hard work, and by the general correctness of its theory and practice. The Party does not claim to be infallible, but it seeks to correct immediately and effectively any errors. The SACP encourages open discussion within its own ranks, and between it and all other left and socialist-oriented forces in our country.

Being a Marxist-Leninist Party, the SACP's basic role is to be the leading political force of the working class. The Party must at all times be in the forefront of combating in theory and practice backward moral, social, cultural and political practices and views. The Party and its members must take the lead in combating racism, tribalism, regionalism, chauvinism, sexism and all forms of narrow nationalism.

As the Party of the South African working class the SACP does not lock itself up narrowly within the working class and its immediate concerns. The Party also seeks to project working-class and socialist perspectives into the wider public domain. The SACP and its members must as a matter of duty participate as effectively as possible in all the major public debates and forums.

But, at the end of the day, all the Party's many functions, stand or fall on its ability to be present, on a day-to-day basis, as an organized, visible, effective and fighting force on the ground, in the townships and villages, in the factories, mines and farms of our country. □

**BUILD THE WORKERS VANGUARD!**

**BUILD THE SACP!**

**VIVA PROLETARIAN  
INTERNATIONALISM!**

**FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!**

**POLITICAL AFFAIRS**



# The destruction of America's children

PHILLIP BONOSKY

Child labor in the USA was legally ended in 1941 when the Supreme Court upheld the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Segregated schools were legally ended, also by Supreme Court edict, in 1954, in the now-famous *Brown vs-the Board of Education* case. Both decisions affected the lives of children intimately. Children who worked when they should have been in school obviously not only missed acquiring essential learning, but were unequipped to deal with the real adult world. Nevertheless, historically, while labor was still predominantly physical, and all you needed was a "strong back" and could afford a "weak mind," a grade school education was deemed education enough and work for an average boy legally began at 14, though often, in practice, much earlier.

But we've come a long way since then. Machines have replaced "strong backs" (for the most part), but it's critically necessary to have a "strong mind" — or any mind at all — to work those machines. Thus, education is indeed a key to success in life and one acquires an education in childhood. Anything that interferes with acquiring an education handicaps that particular child so deprived in the struggle to reach a standard of living at which one can normally raise a family in good health and educate children.

These are essential conditions every nation must meet to deserve to be called civilized. On both of them America fails miserably. But what is different from other countries that fail to provide these basic essentials is that many are too poor to provide their children with these necessities, and can barely provide them with food. America is rich not poor. It has the resources to provide every child with a full education in schools that are attractive to be in, and equipped with everything necessary and up-to-date (computers, etc.) taught by well-trained and dedicated teachers. But more than a third of the schools in America can barely qualify as schools at all, and the process of deterioration which has brought them to this state continues, and will continue, not for fortuitous reasons, but because of policy. A crime of enormous proportions is being perpetrated against millions of children, victims of cruel and inhuman policy, consciously devised and pursued by men (and women) mainly from the upper class who are all graduates of private schools and elite universities), now in political power.

The ruling class in America is not only brutal but also cunning. It gives where it's forced to give but always recoups. Hardly had the Supreme Court ruled that child labor should be restricted than moves were made to evade, get around, or ignore its clear directives. Hardly had that court ruled that schools should be desegregated

"with all deliberate speed" than moves were made also to evade the clear implications of the decision — desegregation proceeded "deliberately" but without "speed." Today segregation has increased, not decreased.

In 1977 Congress amended the Child Labor law which the Supreme Court had validated to let children as young as ten work as harvest laborers.

"Washington, Nov. 24 (1978) - the U.S. Labor Department under pressure from farm groups, overruled warnings from its own medical experts and others and permitted thousands of 10-12 year old children to go to work in pesticide-laden fields last summer....

"The documents...showed that top Labor Department officials waived certain provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act...permit(ting) at least several thousand children...to harvest berries and potatoes after the crops were sprayed with a variety of potentially dangerous pesticides. Dr. Peter Infante, a senior Labor Department cancer expert who advised against the Waiver in a report, called the department's decision "unconscionable."<sup>1</sup>

In 1978, it was estimated that 300,000 children — mainly Black, Hispanic and Chicano — worked in "inhuman conditions" in the fields where they were needed (that is, were cheap), during harvesting. The 300,000 were only a part of the total of 1,237,000 children admitted to be working in various occupations throughout the country. To justify "waiving" the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act which put babies into the field, "proponents painted a pastoral scene...depicting happy farm children gamboling through the berry patches to earn a little extra money for the Saturday movies."<sup>2</sup>

"Gamboling" but not in school. Luckily, cancer takes about 20 years to develop and by that time neither the crime nor the criminal can be legally nailed down.

**EROSION OF RIGHTS** ■ But the process of erosion of democratic victories assumed to be final, never ends. In 1982 the Labor Department "proposed today to expand the hours and types of jobs that 14 and 15 year olds are allowed to work. The revisions would permit children 14 and 15 years old to work up to 24 hours a week during a full school week, six hours more than now."<sup>3</sup>

The proposal was sharply denounced by the AFL-CIO, which pointed out that the children would actually be used for work instead of adults in a time of widening unemployment. Fears too were voiced that the minimum wage would be undermined by underpaying children.

But the prevalence of child labor is far greater than government statistics (which are always unreliable on such matters) reveal. For with the spread of "cottage industry"—work which, normally done in the factory, is now taken home as piece work — the process of undermining and eroding union-established wages and gains

continues relentlessly. Children who work at home to "help" their parents remain uncounted in the child labor statistics. Nor is it incidental that much of "cottage industry" is carried on in one-parent homes, where the mother feels that working at home at least allows her to keep an eye on her children.

Children who work long – or any hours – have no or little time to study. They generally do poorly in school and often end up as delinquents. It seems incredible that in all the voluminous literature, particularly about the enormous problems of educating our children, that the organic link – the cause and effect connection – between escalating school dropouts and poverty, is sedulously downplayed, if not totally ignored. And yet children "are the single largest poverty group among all Americans. In 1987 one in five children of school age and one in four preschoolers lived in poverty; Black and Hispanic children are two to three times more likely to be poor than white children."<sup>4</sup> In August, 1983, Senator Dodd would note that "children are the largest block of homeless in New York City and Boston."

In fact, as the Congressional study which produced these statistics concluded, childhood has become "far more precarious and less safe for millions of America's children."<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, the process of dehumanizing the "lower orders" – already a conscious policy by conservative forces – was given an enormous boost with the election of Ronald Reagan. Built up by the media as a man of charm, whom everybody loved, actually he was one of the cruelest and most callous of all presidents to occupy the White House, completely in the tradition of Coolidge and Hoover.

**REAGANISM** ■ Hardly was Reagan installed in the White House, after an inaugural week which cost \$16 million (with his wife's wardrobe alone costing \$25,000) than he launched what turned out to be one of the most vicious and pitiless attacks on the most vulnerable and defenseless segments of the population – children of the poor. Funds were slashed from federal appropriations for preschool child care for working mothers.

Two and a half billion dollars was immediately cut from school lunch programs, so that in a year some 3.2 million children had no lunches at school, for over 700 schools dropped them for lack of funds. In 1985 Reagan proposed to cut school lunches even more—\$613 million, that is, 24 cents a meal that would drive 8000 more schools and 6 million more children out of the program. Welfare rolls increased – and so did attacks on welfare itself – as working mothers now had to stay home to take care of their children.

More and more women turned over their children to foster homes, swelling the rolls and facilities beyond capacity, cheating an entire generation of children, to be known as "throwaways," of elementary care.

Massive neglect of (working class) children became typical, with the phenomenon of homeless children mak-

ing their appearance in every city across the country. About 10 percent of these children died of neglect. Approximately 150,000 children are abducted yearly from their homes, mainly by estranged parents. But about 50,000 are kidnapped by strangers, and anywhere from 5 to 7 thousand of these turn up dead. Many thousand others just run away from home whose parents or step-parents refuse to take them back when and if they return. Suicides among children "were more likely to come from families with economic stress. The families of children who attempted suicide had twice the rate of paternal unemployment and 14 percent more mothers working full-time."<sup>6</sup>

By 1981, with Reagan firmly in the saddle, all hitherto suppressed racist forces, biding their time, sprang to renewed life. Among the very first victims of the new Reagan Administration was the 1954 Supreme Court decision aimed (if feebly) at desegregating the school system in the country. The Joint Center for Political Studies was already calling on Reagan to stop "aggressive ostracism" of minority children in schools. It pointed out that "two-thirds of the students in the ten largest school districts in 1980 were members of minority groups and that the ratio was rising rapidly."<sup>7</sup> What was already alarming in 1981 had become institutionalized a decade later so that Jonathan Kozol could report in his book, *Savage Inequalities*, that "two very different kinds of institutions are now encompassed by the one word ("school")...children in one set of schools are educated to be governors; children of the other set of schools are trained for being governed."<sup>8</sup>

**TWO SYSTEMS** ■ And, indeed, an entire system of schools—"free choice" schools – for those who are being educated to be "governors" exists and is growing. Private schools have proliferated. A couple of years into Reagan's Administration and we read:

"The number of students in both religious and non-sectarian private schools is growing while public school enrollment is declining. In the 1983-84 school year, 12.6 percent of American students were in schools outside the public system, as against 11.5 percent in 1980... This means that private schools now educate 5.7 million of the 45.2 million American students at elementary and secondary levels."<sup>9</sup>

But this does not fully report the reality. Because of gross inequalities of school funding – with rich areas being more liberally funded – many public schools in the suburbs, in fact, function like de facto private schools, with a restricted pupil registration and a curriculum that prepares students for college. Their social point of view comes close to that of the long-established private schools which consciously train their students for state power. These students, while still in their teens, are taught to come to the "recognition that goodness unadorned by power is impotent in the struggle for privilege. Greatness implies the sacrifice of innocence; the cost of leadership is the acceptance of the world as it is, not the way it ought to be."<sup>10</sup>

It is not purely coincidental that a large proportion of the agents of the CIA came from Ivy League colleges – as William F. Buckley, himself a Yale graduate and CIA agent has reminded us – with Yale apparently being most favored, to which graduates of prep schools normally go.

It hardly needs to be added that with de facto segregation come all the corollary abuses and outrages, crimes and misdemeanors: overcrowded classes, overworked and harassed teachers (who leave as soon as they can), miserable school surroundings, a curriculum keyed deliberately not to teach but to misteach, reading programs that are out of date (some schools have no libraries), the total absence of computers and other instruments to instill and upgrade necessary skills in this technological age, widespread dissemination of drugs, guns, knives, and crime.

That there should be a large dropout rate under such conditions should not be surprising. Dropout rates of minorities are literally staggering, ranging up to 60 percent in some schools with 40,000 teenagers dropping out of the school system in one year in New York City alone. It is, of course, from their ranks that the 800,000 inmates of prison are recruited (not counting the thousands not yet caught). From these dropouts come the young women who end up early mothers, and young men getting jobs at minimum wages, where they are stuck. It is from their ranks too that the army gets its “volunteers,” who are then sent to lands where they’re instructed to kill people (including children) with whom they have more in common than with those who send them.

What is particularly bitter and poignant is that when school segregation was outlawed, hope rose for many minorities that now that no barriers existed to keep their children from a higher education, they could escape poverty and oppression. Black parents, seeing the endless slaughter of Black males on the streets, seized on this life-saver for their children, only to see it dashed a few years later, when college after college raised fees (some which had no fees before, like City College of New York (CCNY), as special grants and scholarships for minority students began to dry up. A *New York Times* editorial reported Sept. 9, 1982 that “the number of students from families earning between \$6000 and \$24,000 a year has plunged 39 percent in just two years.”

**QUIET CIVIL WAR** ■ The fact is that the USA is engaged in what can only be characterized as a “quiet civil war,” with 200 million guns in the possession of 70 million families, and a yearly casualty rate of 30,000 (in 10 years almost as many Americans killed each other at home as died on the battlefields), including 300 children who kill their parents, and another 30,000 Americans who kill themselves, including 5,000 teen and preteen aged children.<sup>11</sup>

Thousands more die of drug overdose, of sexual diseases (mainly AIDS but also the “old” diseases like syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes, etc.). Thousands of others are martyrs in the “quiet civil war” to the point where the

Black male between 15 and 24 is becoming, in the words of Charles Norman, an inner city counselor, “an endangered species. Violence has become a way of life. Homicide has gotten to the point where it’s almost a recreation.”<sup>12</sup>

By 1985, Congress reported that sales of marijuana, cocaine and heroin came to \$75 billion yearly. Not only are drugs a business, the buying, selling and use of drugs is also a political weapon, about whose ramifications President Bush could tell so much. Pornography has also become big business and is now so tightly integrated into the system, that to fight pornography on moral grounds (as some religious and feminist groups do), means to fight the system itself, that is, capitalism.

Almost never mentioned in the alarmist discussion of big city (New York) budgets is that the first cut “from the top” of all city income goes to the big bank consortium which holds a death grip monopoly of city bonds. Indeed, during the previous city crisis, in 1975, it was precisely the banks which dictated the program of social cuts, which the then Mayor Beame readily accepted, and it is the banks which dictate an even more severe program of social cuts which the present mayor seems unable to resist. The fetish of a “balanced budget” has been the weapon which Reagan used to cut billions from social programs (and gave them to the military), though the budget remains as “unbalanced” as ever.

**INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS** ■ Nevertheless, as bad as the situation for oppressed children in the U.S. is, one should also be reminded of the plight in which millions of children live elsewhere around the world, their plight directly due to their status as plundered colonials, who are still forced to pay an enormous tribute to the very banks in New York who are also plundering American children.

The UN reports that 75 million children have to work hard every day, and that some 40,000 die of starvation daily, most of them before they are five years old. UNICEF adds that 140,000 children died in various wars in South Africa in 1986, about 60,000 in Lebanon’s endless war, and between 170,000 and 180,000 were either killed, or are dying, or will die of the after-effects of the war in Iraq.

“At the same time,” writes Francisco Gamboa, “I wonder (how many) know of the enormous scale of child trade: tens of millions of children are sold every year for the overall sum of billions of dollars.”<sup>13</sup> “They are sold into child labor and for prostitution (both sexes) in Thailand at prices ranging from \$7.50 to \$50, depending on the child’s “age, strength and beauty.”<sup>14</sup>

They are sold to work in sweatshops, as servants in the homes of the rich (including the USA), and – most gruesome of all – their organs are also sold secretly to the rich all over the world who need transplants.

With all this, and a veritable mountain of further facts every bit as heinous, going to prove that a conscious policy to institutionalize a lower class exists and is being vig-

ously pushed, it is surprising to learn that many politicians, including unfortunately the mayor of New York, and other "opinion makers" are dodging both the reality and the only rational cure for it. They echo President Bush's (a man who is a product of private schools almost from birth) formula for meeting the admitted national crisis in education. Bush claims that "money" isn't the answer to better schooling. "Indeed" President Bush is quoted piously, "a society that worships money...is a society in peril."

The shift from even the most elementary level of social consciousness has swung so far to the right that it's possible now to read in a recent issue of the *New York Times*:

"There has been a recent shift in thinking about who carries the burden for breakdowns in society that grow more shocking each year. Both policy-makers and the public seem to be rejecting the argument that society at large is responsible for the criminal behavior of children. They are instead blaming and trying to punish the parents." 15

**BLAMING PARENTS** ■ It seems incredible that this leap-back into what can only be characterized as the Dark Ages of sociology have returned. In the 1930s, a husband and wife team of Harvard Law School Professors, Doctors Sheldon and Eleanore Glueck, published a soon-to-be famous book *Criminal Careers in Retrospect*, based on a 15 year study of 500 delinquent boys from the Boston area – all white, all working class – in which they claimed that the study proved that it was possible scientifically to determine what children would become delinquents later, and when. They charged that the source of child delinquency was to be found in the family, in the absence of parental care. "Nature" produced the "nurture" which then produced the bad children, the criminals. More than one judge based his open-ended sentences of delinquent children on the "scientific findings" of the Gluecks. Their ideas were even tried again in New York's Bronx in the '50s.

In January, 1960, the Gluecks announced that their study of 223 boys from two Bronx schools had proven "94.6 percent accurate" in one instance, and Mayor Wagner was so impressed by their predictive accuracy that he approved Commissioner of Youth services Whelman's recommendation to the Board of Education that they adapt the Gluecks "predictability tables" in a program for spotting future delinquency in New York City's school children.

In April, 1970, another proposal to "spot" future delinquents in pre-teen-aged children, using Rorschach tests and then putting children with "violent and homicidal tendencies" into special camps, was put forward by a Dr. Arnold Hutschnecker. This scheme was widely denounced by many psychologists though it had President Nixon's support.

It wasn't adopted. But the search for a "scientific" method of "spotting" criminals in their cribs – establishing

a "criminal class" among the poor on a biological basis – goes on. But no similar scheme has ever been suggested to spot criminals in elementary schools of Suburbia which will warn the world about future slum lords, war profiteers, bank presidents who launder drug money, sell uzzi machine guns to gangsters, monopolize and profiteer from life-saving drugs, and so on.

The return to blaming parents for the adolescents' misbehavior seems unbelievable in the face of the fact that, with cuts in assistance to families, and the additional fact that so many heads-of-family women are caught in low-paying jobs, more and more children are left to shift for themselves. At least 21 percent of families are headed by women, which adds up to over 9 million. Studies have estimated that there are between 4 and 10 million (latch-key) children nationally, and in New York City between 100,000 and 300,000 children aged 5 to 13 are left unsupervised in the afternoons.

No program exists which even remotely comes near to grappling with the problem. And, while the "policy makers" are busy blaming mothers for the delinquency of their children, the city of New York announces that in its 1992 budget it will cut \$400 million from the City Health and Hospital Corporation funds, and most pointedly, \$7 million more are scheduled to be cut from laboratory testing and TB screening. Such cuts in the face of a dramatic rise in TB infection amounting to an epidemic surely cannot be blamed on the laxity of working mothers living in slums. The arrogance of power has never manifested itself more openly than it does today. Decisions are made against the interests of the people as though the people were totally incidental in the plans of those in power. The intellectual thrashing about, the hypocritical wringing of hands over the plight of the schools, the "painful" coming to the conclusion that the fate of the poor is the responsibility of the poor is material for caricature.

This is not the place to itemize the almost endless untouched resources for taxation that exist – precisely the grossly under taxed profits of corporations whose "share" in the tax bill barely amounts to 8 percent. The solution – solution for all practical purposes, if not the final solution to the school situation – is the passage of a law that legislates either state or federal (or both) funding that is distributed equally to all school districts, so that at least the abomination of a poor school in one district lacking even pencils and another rich school just blocks away, but exclusively zoned, is equipped with computers, is done away with.

It's nonsense to say that equality will bring mediocrity. Inequality brings elitism and snobbism. What is called mediocrity is very often nothing more than the result of neglect and teacher under-staffing. What produces snobbism is the reality of living in a privileged set of circumstances with the knowledge that other children are denied anything like them.

Money may not be the final answer but without it there is no answer at all. It's interesting that the cry that money is not the answer comes from sources where there

is no problem of money. Of course, no educational system can transcend the social laws of the society that produces it and which it serves. This does not prevent all kinds of attempts to bypass, evade, or invent clever gimmicks that, while appearing to give an education, actually confirm the class relations, with in-built racism and institutionalized poverty of the society in which we live. It should be added that while poor kids suffer from oppression, rich kids too are morally deformed from the very fact that they benefit from the oppression of the poor. The elimination of the oppression of the poor is also the spiritual liberation of the children of the middle and even upper class.

As an addendum to the study of the plight of children all over the world it is not beside the point to note that before the recent Gorbachev-Yeltsin counterrevolutionary putsch in the USSR that country had the most advanced educational and health service system for children anywhere in the world. As we know, education was free from the kindergarten to the university. And that education was based on a civilized world view that produced truly educated people. The health of the people was also kept under medical scrutiny from birth to death. Just a glance at the record of legislation for children enacted over the years and collected in Soviet Legislation on Children's Rights reveals the scope of the care and attention that the socialist USSR gave to its children, never slighting funds, and never denying anyone medical care or an education because they cost too much.<sup>16</sup>

Today, as the "market economy" spreads like a malign disease, we already are aware of a "parallel" system of private schools established in Russia for the well-to-do or for those expecting to become rich. A similar private medical system for the beneficiaries of the "economy" has also appeared, draining off the better doctors and buying up scarce medical supplies and special facilities.

The triumph of reaction in the one time socialist countries has given an enormous push to reaction everywhere, which can now claim that capitalism is the norm of life and socialism a departure. Thus, in a real sense the fight for the rights of children anywhere is a fight for the rights of children everywhere.

And, meanwhile, while millions suffer, there is another world for whom the world of suffering and poverty is nothing but the occasion for a joke. In the upper classes not only is a social conscience passe but is considered bad taste. Writes Diane Vreeland in *Allure*: "We mustn't be afraid of snobbism and absurdity. And we mustn't be afraid of luxury – there are no pictures of poverty here!" And: "Living well is still the best revenge."<sup>17</sup>

Revenge against the working class, that is. □

#### Footnotes

1. *Washington Post*, Nov. 24, 1978.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *New York Times*, July 6, 1982.
4. *New York Times*, Oct. 1, 1989
5. *Ibid.*
6. *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 1982.
7. *New York Times*, Jan. 26, 1981.
8. *Savage Inequalities*, by Jonathan Kozol, Crown Publishers, New York, 1991, p. 176.
9. *New York Times*, Feb. 3, 1985
10. *Preparation for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*, by Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell, Basic Books, NY, 1985, p. 183.
11. *When a Child Kills*, by Paul Mones.
12. *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1991.
13. *World Marxist Review*, June, 1988..
14. *New York Times*, Aug. 12, 1980
15. Maria Newman, *New York Times*, Dec. 22, 1991.
16. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979.
17. *Selling Culture*, by Deborah Silver, Pantheon Books, 1986.

## Response to Angela Davis

After the damage done to the world Communist movement by right opportunism and factionalism several parties are recovering and re-establishing their Marxist-Leninist and working-class foundations. Significant examples of this process are the establishment of the Communist Workers Party of Russia, the consolidation of the Communist Parties of France and Greece, the organization of Marxist-Leninists around the Communist Refoundations in Italy, and moves towards regroupment of Communists in Brazil and Great Britain. These and other developments are crucial indicators of a turn away from opportunism. Of profound importance is the decision made by Cuban Communists at their October Congress to stay the course of socialist construction and proletarian internationalism.

Among Parties operating in capitalist nations the results of the South African and US Party Conventions are of special significance. Operating in two of world imperialism's strategic centers, their decision to stay the course of the class struggle and reject policies of retreat and capitulation to social democracy carries unusual weight.

The special significance of these two conventions lies in the fact that both parties confront imperialism and the multinational corporations in ways that few others do. That they independently arrived at similar, if not identical, conclusions is of major political and ideological importance for the world Communist and national liberation forces.

Meeting the same weekend in December, both affirmed Marxism-Leninism as their party's ideological basis and declared that the objective of the class and democratic struggles is socialism. By a wide majority the South African Party rejected the effort to qualify socialism, with the adjective democracy (as in democratic socialism) and asserted that socialism is inherently democratic. Both concluded that the failures and current crises within socialism are not rooted in the system, but were produced by human error. Each restated its commitment to proletarian internationalism, democratic centralism, the centrality of the class struggle and upheld the strategic nature of industrial workers to the class as a whole. And finally, the two parties insisted upon the necessity of building broad alliances against the economic crisis and the rise of reaction and racism and the critical importance of the working-class leadership to these movements.

It is within this context Comrade Angela Davis' recent *Political Affairs* article, "The South African Communist Party: A Personal View" appeared. Comrade Angela accurately presents the long standing and mutually fruitful relationship between the South African CP and the African National Congress (ANC). She correctly and forcefully rebuffs the view of bourgeois journalists and

anti-communist scholars that the South African Party is a brake upon the ANC's leading the unfolding democratic struggle and insists that any retreat from the strategic alliance of the ANC, SACP and the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) would undermine the historic march to freedom and occasion disaster for the people of South Africa. Angela is moreover accurate in pointing to the care and tactical flexibility with which the ANC and SACP have developed this alliance. The requirement that every Party member also be a member of the ANC and that the work of Communists within be guided by the democratically arrived at conclusions of its national, regional and local leadership, is another of the critical observations which she presents. However, to what Angela says must be added that the strength and quality of this alliance has been built upon mutual respect, commonly agreed to objectives and each maintaining its organizational, ideological, and political independence.

At the same time Angela makes other observations concerning the internal politics of the South African Party that in light of its recently concluded Congress only scratch the surface of an important debate. In fact some of her conclusions are misleading.

It has been clear for some time that two ideological poles exist within the SACP. The publication by former General Secretary Joe Slovo of the pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* and other writings exhibited a lean in a social democratic direction. On the other hand Harry Gwala, leader of the Party and the ANC in Natal, the industrial heartland of South Africa, represents in his article "Let Us Look at History in the Round" [*The African Communist*, No.123, Fourth Quarter, 1990] an alternative position to that espoused by Slovo; a working-class, Marxist-Leninist approach to understanding socialism's crisis. In the end, these two leaders came to represent essentially different approaches to the class struggle and the crisis within socialism. In this regard, Comrade Angela's article seriously misunderstands the meaning of this struggle and the relative strength of the two sides.

Since its legalization and return from exile the Party has recruited some 24,000 new members. Most have been Black workers, with large numbers coming from basic industry. These new recruits and the historic strength of the Party in the South African working class and in the national liberation movement became the crucial vector in shaping the decisions of the Congress. It was, finally, the working-class majority which spoke at the Congress. Comrade Angela, however, failed to recognize this reality. Hence, she speaks of the "position represented by Harry Gwala" as a minority position and observes there "was never an attempt to defame or vilify him."

But here she speaks as if Gwala represented an ossified and out of step minority within the Party. Actually, Gwala's positions were and are the views of the majority. To "vilify" or "defame" these positions would represent an attack

upon the Party's working-class majority. The fact that the matter is presented in a way which is at total variance with the reality within the SACP is a point which cannot be taken lightly. It seems to represent a failure to understand the ascending role of the working class within South Africa generally and the SACP in particular. Thus, it would have been more accurate if it had been pointed out that in spite of the fact that the positions represented by Joe Slovo were a minority there was no attempt to defame his position.

While misunderstanding which were minority and majority positions Comrade Angela's view of the situation within the South African Party may have more to do with her views on our own party's recent internal struggle. Indeed, rather than a serious evaluation of the respective positions and their implications, Comrade Angela's observations tend to be rooted in wishful thinking about both. It cannot be overlooked that much of what she writes attempts to convince the reader that the minority in the South African Party is actually a majority. There is in addition the subtle suggestion that our party should follow suit and adopt these positions. This would put us in step, she reasons, with the "renewal" movement toward reform and democracy supposedly occurring in leading parties throughout the world.

With respect to the ideological and political posture of the minority views in the South African and US parties there are similarities and differences. For example, the minorities in each Party were pretty much confined to leadership bodies and did not extend significantly into the membership. Similarly, the minorities tended to hold social democratic views about the class struggle, Marxism-Leninism, party organization and industrial concentration. And both found affinity with the views of "reform communists" in the Soviet Union like Gorbachev and Roy Medvedev. Each viewed the crisis of socialism as systemic; each sought to rewrite the histories of their Parties and world socialism in ways that vilified and defamed the Party, the working class and socialism. In the end the majorities of each Party rejected the essence of these views.

However while similarities abound it should also be pointed out that there are differences between the two. In fact the profound difference is that in the US Party the "renewal movement" turned to factionalism, which in the end sought to either take over the leadership or leave and had no intention of abiding by the democratic will of the Convention. Our minority continues anti-Party activity in league with left and pseudo-left forces whose hostility to the Party and the working class are well known and long standing. In South Africa, however, the minority abided by the decisions of the majority. For example, Joe Slovo and the new General Secretary Chris Hani had wanted to qualify the word socialism with the adjective democracy. The majority rejected this qualification and both comrades accepted it.

The *Draft Manifesto*, the principle discussion document of the South African party in the pre-Congress period, reflected the views of the outgoing leadership headed by Joe Slovo. At the convention a good part of its thinking

especially the overt turn to social democracy, was rejected. A *Manifesto* more in line with the working class majority was adopted. While evidencing consensus building and compromise on several points, the final manifesto, was unswerving in upholding the fact that the Party is Marxist-Leninist and seeks to play a vanguard role in defending and advancing the interests of the working class.

In South Africa the minority remains in the party and unlike the factional center in our Party accepted the will of the majority. The leadership of the faction have expressed contempt for our Party's working-class majority and have attempted to sabotage its ability to carry out the decisions of the 25th Convention.

Comrade Angela concludes her article with these words:

The South African Communist Party may be on its way to becoming a new international center from which global inspiration to continue to fight for socialism can emanate. If this is the case it will be a new center not only in the chronological sense, but also in the sense of establishing new, reciprocal, democratic relationships with communist parties throughout the world.

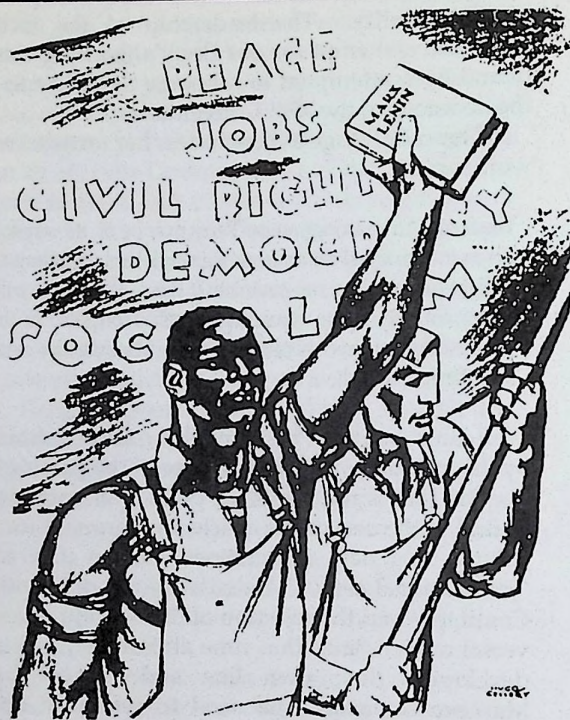
I am not certain that Angela would continue to stand by this position after the outcome of the party's Congress.

But that is not the main point. It is rather surprising to find in the end of the article an argument for the establishing of a new international center. The idea of an "international center" ended with the dismantling of the Comintern and the rejection of the concept of a single universal model. Since that time all Parties have insisted on developing their own line and tactics based upon Marxism-Leninism. The need to refine an approach to building socialism on the basis of the conditions and history of each country is particularly important in light of recent events. Thus the re-emergence of the concept of a new international center is to say the least startling.

Comrade Angela's point, I believe, is that "reform communists" and left social democrats "may be on their way to becoming a new international center." The fact that she emphasizes, "not only in a chronological sense" indicates that it is the politics and ideology of the "reform communists" that would be the theoretical core of this "new center." With the collapse and outlawing of the CPSU and the failure of Gorbachev, Yakovlev and others to "reform" in a social democratic direction the CPSU, Angela looked to SACP and especially the line of Joe Slovo to become the political and ideological basis of a "new international center".

While the struggle continues and many questions still have to be resolved, it would seem that Marxism-Leninism within the world Communist and Workers' movement has scored important victories over opportunism and revisionism. These are the achievements around which the world movement is regrouping. The contributions of the working-class majorities in the South African and US Parties are crucial to this process. □

*Tony Monteiro*



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