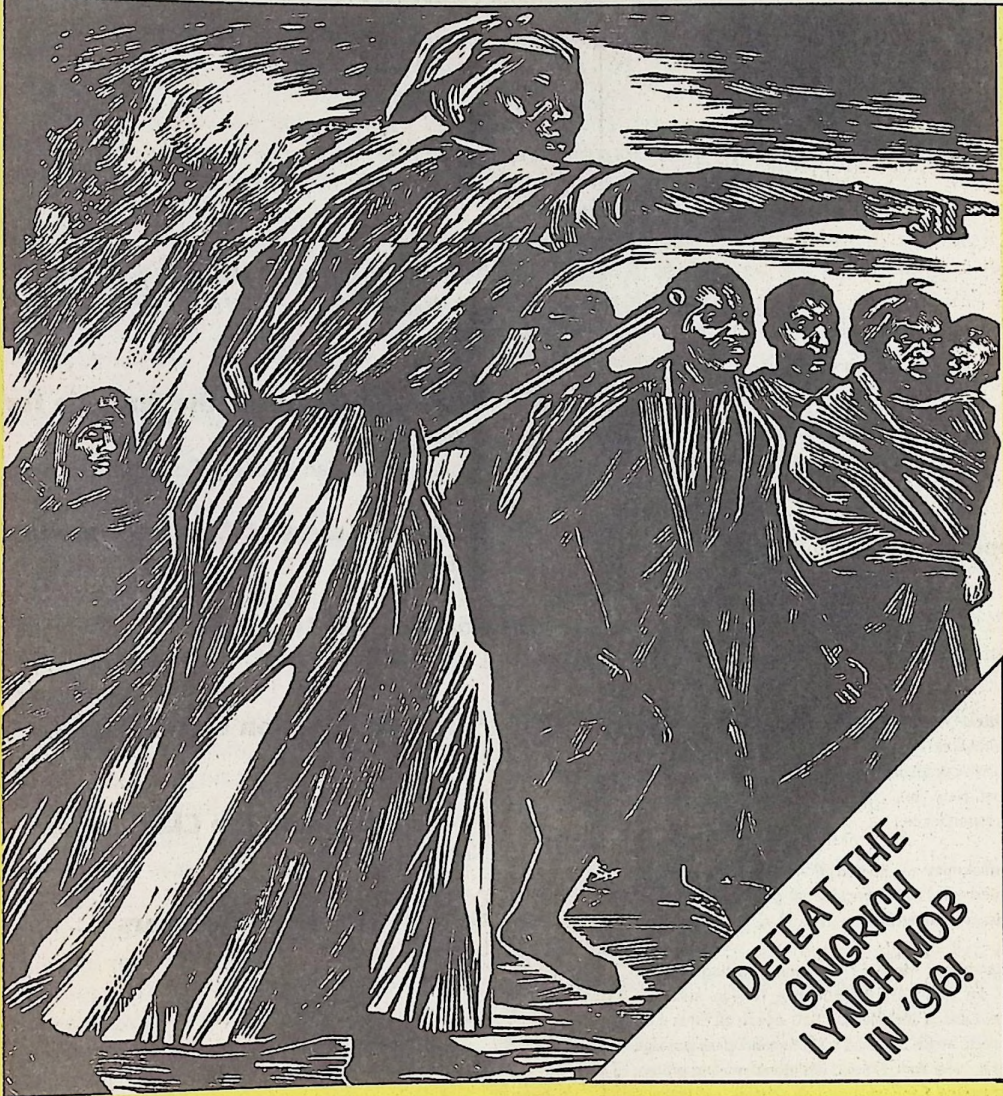


Political Affairs

Theoretical Journal, Communist Party USA, February, 1996

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DEFEAT THE
GINGRICH
LYNCH MOB
IN '96!

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

- ▣ DEFEAT THE CONTRACT - GUS HALL
- ▣ DRAFT EQUALITY RESOLUTION
- ▣ YOUTH & THE ELECTIONS - MIRTZ

- ▣ CRIMINALIZATION - PERLO
- ▣ ART & CULTURE - GOLDBERG



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The Struggle to Defeat the Contract on America

Gus Hall

My opening remarks today are more than ever the collective product of the executive of the National Board and others.

This fact has an impact on my presentation in two ways. Because of the collectivity it is a richer, deeper and more comprehensive product. It is more reflective of the thinking of the collective on new developments. This is a new, very positive feature of our collective work. On the other hand, because of this my opening is somewhat longer.

From this meeting on, everything we take up, everything we do has to be seen as part of the preparations for our 26th National Convention in little over two months. Everything we say and write will and should be seen as part of our pre-convention discussion and preparations. We are in a special period in which all questions, issues, policies, positions are open and on the table for discussion for possible adjustment or change.

Taking a fresh, new look is especially important because this is a moment of fundamental changes in many areas of life. This applies also to our Party because we are in the process of a transition to a new mass Party. This is perhaps the most difficult concept we will still have to win the whole Party on, which I think will be made easier if we use the C-SPAN experience. More on this later.

Thus, everything we discuss at this two-day full board meeting should be considered as part of the framework for pre-convention discussion. Well, maybe not quite everything. Being a kind of science nut I am always on the watch for new, revolutionary discoveries. So, right at the beginning let me indulge my scientific musings with something new, and that is an analogy to the subject at hand.

What I'm going to say should not be a total surprise to Marxist-Leninists and to all those who understand dialectical materialism and the unity of opposites. Last week, scientists for the first time produced what they called "anti-matter" - matter that is the opposite of matter. This may not sound earth-shaking, but it is.

Anyway this should not come as a complete surprise to us because we have been dealing with the matter of the anti-people Republican Contract which is in total opposition to the interests of our people. Like matter that is anti-matter, the Republican gang of 75 are anti-people.

Then there was the recent discovery of 50 billion more galaxies and the sighting of two more planets that may contain the elements that sustain life, "extraterrestrial life" as the scientists call it. So in the scientific, as well as the political, economic, social and ideological spheres, we are dealing with things that are totally new.

Now down to our business. Since the response to the document we sent to the Party on pre-convention discussions was sparse, it is clear we will have to be more creative in stimulating comrades to write.

The material we do have is on different levels. In order to provide a publication to print material that is not appropriate for *Political Affairs* or the *People's Weekly World*, we are proposing a special pre-convention bulletin, the first issue of which will go out the end of this month. This method will enable us to circulate different kinds of contributions.

THE "CONTRACT ON AMERICA" ■ The one question that is affecting everything - the political scene, the economy, the electoral field, every class and sector and every area of life in our country - is the GOP wrecking crew's "Contract on America."

The Contract is the program of the most reactionary, ruthless and powerful section of the corporate ruling class to force the federal government and Congress to abandon all responsibility for the people's welfare through entitlements, to severely cut and preferably abolish all lifeline and safety net programs. The anti-people character of the assault calls for broad approaches and tactics, although the impact on the different sectors will be uneven.

Clinton has vetoed the Republican-passed Budget Reconciliation Bill. He has so far approved only about half of the 13 Contract appropriation bills that have been sent to his desk. He vetoed the welfare "reform" bill. And it is true that his standing in the

Gus Hall is national chairman of the CPUSA.

polls improved during the three-week government shutdown.

But he has agreed to two continuing resolutions. These resolutions keep the government running but cut federal funding for some social programs by 25 percent and allocate no money for others including, for example, the Civil Rights Division.

Yes, he has held the line on protecting Medicare, but has waffled on Medicaid and remained silent on protecting the entitlement status of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) that benefit not only children, but the disabled and the most vulnerable.

We have to keep in mind that Clinton's courage ebbs and flows directly in relation to the strength and militancy of labor and the people's movements.

WHAT NOW? ■ This week ushers in a new round in the battle for the heart and soul of the United States: the continuing resolution funding the government expires this Friday and President Clinton delivers his State of the Union address tonight. By the end of this week we should have a clearer picture of "what now?"

Will there be another continuing resolution that, if the last two are any measure, will see the continuation of a process that has seen the White House cave in to many of the cuts contained in the "Contract?"

Will there be a "balanced budget" based on a "compromise" between the cuts offered in Clinton's version of a seven-year balanced budget and the \$1.2 trillion in cuts demanded by Congress? And we have to keep in mind that both parties admit that a deal on the numbers, the "arithmetic" of a balanced budget is within reach, meaning further concessions by the President.

We should be clear. Either will bring additional hardship to hundreds of millions, including 32 million children who are members of families with annual incomes of less than \$30,000, to the more than 30 million people (most of them children, the disabled and elderly) who depend on Medicaid and to another 36 million people covered by Medicare.

We are dealing with cold-blooded, unrelenting, aggressive millionaire reactionaries, loyal ruling class flunkies whose primary, single-minded objective is getting as much of the Contract passed as possible even if it means they won't be reelected.

On the other hand, Dole and Gingrich are in for the long haul and anxiously watching the polls. Dole, sensing which way the winds are blowing, is

fruitlessly trying to convince the hardliners to "make a deal." Failing that, he is trying to distance himself by proposing solutions to end the government shutdown.

Even Gingrich is trying to tame his "kiddy-corps zealots," who are responding by attacking Dole for "cowardice." So there are rifts developing in Republican ranks as another temporary continuing resolution puts the government back in business.

Thus, this is a critical juncture. Whatever the shifting landscape turns out to be, we have to accept the urgent responsibility to help build and initiate new struggles, movements and coalitions against the Contract wherever we are.

At this moment people are angry and disgusted with Congress and the government. As the budget battle continues, apprehension, worry and a sense of impending disaster grows among the people. This mass mood can drive many non-voters to the polls come November.

THE FIGHT TO SAVE WELFARE ■ We have underestimated the Contract, the forces behind it and the effects on every aspect of life in the U.S. Thus, on the one hand millions are worried and even scared. On the other, the majority do not yet know what exactly is going to happen to their lives families, their children's futures, homes, jobs, pensions and so on.

It is estimated that the Contract will immediately push two million more children into poverty. The recent vote in the Senate, in which a majority of Democrats joined the Republican right in dismantling welfare marked a major turning point in the wrong direction. It points to the degree of the danger.

In some states, for example, single homeless, destitute men have been cut off "general assistance," which is a state program, but cannot be separated from the coming cuts in federal programs.

The Senate vote signaled that benefits for all, including women and children, are not far behind. Welfare must not be eliminated as a compromise for "saving" Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. If welfare is eliminated, Medicaid, Medicare and even Social Security will not be far behind.

The recent meeting of the African American Commission pointed out that close to 65 percent of all African American children receive some form of welfare benefits. The same holds true for Mexican American and Puerto Rican children. These will be the first victims of the Contract.

Today, there can be no effective fight against racism without fighting to save welfare benefits for the majority of Black and Latino children. Also, there can be no effective fight for equality without the fight for jobs and strong, enforceable affirmative action measures.

These problems are made even more serious by the lack of organized mass movement and pressure to create jobs with affirmative action and to save welfare benefits.

We have to more emphatically pose the question of why we aren't taking more initiative in this struggle. There is clearly enormous potential as recent demonstrations around the country have shown. Where the trade unions have become involved – like in New York and Ohio – big demonstrations are possible. Can we take such initiatives in central labor councils or state AFL-CIO councils in other states, like Connecticut, Illinois, Pennsylvania and California?

We have to seek the most effective ways of fighting the Contract during this election year. While a national demonstration against the Contract is probably unlikely in a presidential election year, state and local demonstrations are possible.

At the last National Committee meeting we placed the need for demonstrations at the homes, offices and churches of right-wing Congressmen. This could be very effective as the election year approaches. Our Party could be very effective in launching well-organized, well-publicized actions in local areas. Our new members can be activated around such activities.

The Contract is also directly affecting the ruling class because their Congressional flunkies are quietly but relentlessly and successfully pushing for legislation that will eliminate the laws, regulations, standards and codes that took years to put some brakes on the greed and corruption of corporate America.

Behind the Contract, corporate America is working to undo critical environmental laws on pollution, protection of public lands and resources – all environmental regulations that cut into the maximum profits of the corporate polluters.

And, they are holding the federal government hostage for all kinds of "corporate welfare" and a huge tax cut for the rich.

The stock market fluctuations also reflect the Contract. With every corporate downsizing announcement the company stock goes up, and so do its profits.

That is because corporations are optimistic and the ruling class has confidence that the economic crises, including the five trillion dollar debt, can be solved on the backs of the working class and poor.

The Contract has a direct bearing on the economic cycles, but also in deepening the general crisis of capitalism.

Robert Reich, Clinton's labor secretary, a sometimes liberal, puts the problem this way:

As corporations have focused more and more intensely on increasing shareholders' returns and less and less on improving the standard of living of their workers, it should be no surprise that the stock market has soared, while pink slips have proliferated.

What is his solution? To give "enticements," to bribe corporations to keep their employees and keep plants open. Not a very "people-before-profits" solution.

At the same time the mega-mergers continue, fewer and fewer corporations own and control more whole industries, financial institutions, mass media and communications, the downsizing and privatizing continues and the layoffs get bigger and bigger.

LAYOFFS, DOWNSIZING AND CRISIS ■ On page one of the January 3rd *New York Times*, AT&T gave their workforce a New Years layoff announcement of 48,000, one of biggest. AT&T had already eliminated 100,000. General Motors was a close second in 1991, with a layoff of 70,000 and IBM, third, with 63,000. The *Times* has no hesitation saying that, "the announcement comes at a time when all segments of its business are profitable and growing."

This is an unprecedented, never-before moment in U.S. history when many areas of life in our dying capitalist system are in crisis: our infrastructure, roads, bridges, housing and whole cities are crumbling; while industries merge and remerge creating huge industrial-financial-global conglomerates who have the power to downsize, while making record profits. These corporations continue privatizing all the national, public wealth in land resources while poisoning the environment with impunity, laying off hundreds of thousands, throwing millions into poverty and into the streets, creating a new era of sweatshops and prison chain-gang free labor. In many ways our richest country in the world is the most backward, most violent, immoral, criminal and corrupt in the world.

In the midst of all this, comes the Gingrich Gang of 73 with its criminal, gangland-like Contract on America, a fascist-like plan to strip the working people of every hard-won quality of life program established over 50 years of fierce class battles.

LABOR & THE NEW AFL-CIO ■ The new leadership has scheduled an Executive Council meeting at the end of this month that will map out a campaign to defeat 55 Contract Republicans. Grassroots coordinators from the federation have already been assigned to all 55 districts; a million dollars in TV and radio ads were aired and phone banking, rallies and picketlines are being organized.

There are big organizing campaigns in place or on the boards. The Federation has allocated millions to train 300 new organizers.

This January, AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting will also consider recommendations from the Sweeney leadership for some qualitative changes in the labor movement, to consider endorsing a presidential candidate and to develop election strategies.

Our assessment of a turning point in labor toward a more militant, aggressive, offensive, class struggle policy remains sound. But we need to place much more stress on grassroots pressure, initiative and actions at the local union and central labor council levels that will influence and pressure the top leadership. Much greater emphasis on activating the grassroots rank and file is called for at this moment.

If focus on the grassroots becomes our rule of thumb, our initiatives will in most cases be welcomed, especially around the '96 elections. Our overall tactics in relation to the labor movement have to be flexible and geared to building broad, all-people's unity in forming anti-Contract alliances and coalitions. We should use tactics geared to put labor up front as the leader of the struggle against the Contract, as well as electoral struggles against the Republicans.

Of course, there will be moments when we do not see eye to eye with labor on an issue or question or action. Increasingly, especially because of the changes, our Party is invited to meet with labor and political leaders, locally and nationally. We have to take advantage of this new credibility and influence to express any differences in a careful, constructive way.

There is a movement growing in southern California initiated by the trade unions called "labor to neighbor" which calls for working to establish cooperative working relationships between unions,

union activists and community organizations to target and defeat Contract Republicans and elect especially labor candidates.

The AFL-CIO is also targeting economic issues for initiatives on the November ballot as an essential part of their strategy to win at the polls in November. For example, in California, the Livable Wage Coalition, a labor-led statewide organization, has launched a campaign to place an initiative on the California ballot which will increase the minimum wage from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.00 an hour in 1997 and to \$5.75 an hour in 1998. \$750,000 is being raised to finance this effort.

Training sessions in Los Angeles and San Francisco are underway for trade unionists to launch a labor-community grassroots campaign to collect 750,000 signatures by the end of March. In Arizona the state federation of labor is campaigning to put a workers Bill of Rights initiative on the ballot. Similar initiatives are in motion in other states.

These campaigns are part of a strategy to take an offensive posture on basic economic survival issues, parallel with fighting against the Contract and the efforts to defeat right-wing Republicans.

LABOR AND THE MARTINEZ BILL ■ Labor's thinking is that these initiatives will be critical to turning out workers, the poor, Black, Brown and white to vote in November, as well as to put pressure on the Democrats to adopt a pro-labor, pro-people program. It gives voters something positive to vote for which is part of solving the crisis. Many voters won't come out just to vote against. They will need an incentive, like the possibility of voting for an anti-Contract, pro-labor candidate.

Included in this offensive posture to turn out the vote, as well as to put pressure on the Democrats to address solutions, are the developments around the Martinez Jobs Bill. The Los Angeles-based Labor Coalition For Public Works Jobs, which is leading the campaign for the bill, has launched a multi-level campaign to convince the labor movement to include the fight for this bill in their '96 electoral strategy.

So far eight of the largest California labor councils are doing just that by initiating an effort to win every labor body in the state to include the bill in '96 election work. Some unions are including support for the Martinez Bill in their candidate interviews as a litmus test for endorsement. Some unionists are running as delegates for the Democratic Party Convention with the Martinez bill on their program.

The slogan, "the Martinez Bill is our answer to the Contract on America" is being adopted by council after council and local after local on the West Coast and in parts of the Southwest.

The Indiana State Federation of Labor just became the 5th state federation to support the Martinez Bill and in so doing called for all Congressional candidates who seek COPE endorsement to support the bill.

These labor-led coalitions and grassroots initiatives can become massive movements to defeat Republicans and the Contract. Labor can and must become the leader of people's movements against the Contract and its supporters.

At this moment there is not enough motion, action or changes. However, we have to take into consideration that making qualitative changes from a 100-year history of ingrained and entrenched bureaucracy, class collaboration and opportunism will take time.

Generally, most people are not yet angry enough, people are not yet vocal and active enough. But, we have to be self-critical because we are not yet angry enough. We have to get angrier and more involved.

And we have to work with the trade union movement to tap into, to help activate and organize the rising fury of the working class and poor.

THE 1996 ELECTIONS ■ To defeat the Gang of 75 is not an abstract political question. It has to be a focused, planned concrete plan of struggle to save the lives of the elderly, the ill and disabled. It is a concrete struggle to feed the hungry and to shelter the homeless. It is a concrete struggle against racism. It is a concrete struggle to preserve a livable environment. Closing down the government is but one example of what the 75 fanatic Republicans are ready to do to get their way on the budget cuts. To the 75 we have to add some Republican women in Congress from states like Connecticut and Oklahoma.

Evidently the women elected from states like this felt they had to identify with the most backward, more reactionary Republicans to maintain their seats. Thus, they also have to be defeated.

At this moment we can make our biggest contribution by helping to organize, to build and even initiate movements to challenge the Contract Republicans in the 1996 elections.

Many of the trade unions and other mass organizations have already decided to make the defeat

of the right-wing Republications a top priority in the elections. This makes it easier to organize coalitions to defeat the anti-Contract candidates.

We have to fight for such tactics as initiating alliances, anti-Contract electoral coalitions to defeat targeted Republicans. In fact, most of the activity against the Contract can be most effectively conducted through the '96 elections.

The Contract is forcing a basic shift in people's thinking about the elections and candidates. This shift, if recognized and galvanized, is capable of defeating the ultra-right Republicans. The question we must answer is: how can the Contract be totally defeated at the polls on November 5, 1996?

This year, besides the presidency, the entire House of Representatives and 33 U.S. Senate seats are at stake. Also, the governors and state legislators in 11 states.

If a united, anti-Contract alliance can be forged, a major defeat could be scored. Such an alliance must include third-party forces and independents, inside and outside of the two old parties.

The fight must be aimed at stopping the Republicans from winning the White House, while keeping pressure on Clinton to resist the Contract.

If we can convince the whole Party and move it into high gear organizing protest actions and voters' anti-Contract alliances, we can be the advance force that taps into and organizes the anger and new thinking.

Many Democrats are not convinced they can win election, or reelection. That explains why so many of them have decided not to run for reelection. At this point, they would rather take their big pensions and run than take the risk of losing the election campaign.

The mass media and the public opinion polls are just beginning to catch on to the new mood and thought patterns that are fast becoming a potential defeat for the "Contract" Republicans. Gingrich's new low 19 percent approval rating and Clinton's growing approval rating shows the change in the thinking of millions that can make and break candidates.

Broad, public opposition and spontaneous action are almost sure to grow as people begin to feel the impact. Shifting thought patterns and spontaneous actions, however, will not defeat the Contract or the Republicans in November. To do that, Communist, left, trade union and people's organized and united initiatives are necessary.

As Labor Party Advocates continues to ignore the electoral arena, it will gradually become an irrelevant, ineffective force in a situation where the '96 elections can mean defeating the Contract or being defeated by the Contract.

ELECTORAL LESSONS ■ It is clear that many of the major people's forces have not yet caught on to the changes and, in fact, have a wrong assessment of the overall electoral picture. There are wrong estimates of the mass trends that are based on wrong estimates of the '95 elections.

The '95 election results showed that progressives can be elected and in fact the voters will support candidates who are ready to fight for more independent, progressive policies.

The Republicans won *not* because they got more votes. They won because a large number of Democrats and workers, women and racially and nationally oppressed stayed at home.

However, I think these sectors are in the process of changing and that they will vote in '96. We have to help give people reasons to go out and vote.

History shows that wherever voters felt they could make a difference in the '95 elections, they voted. The fact is that voters swept out of office every right-wing Contract-on-America Republican they could. Willie Brown and especially Jesse Jackson, Jr., are examples.

We have to show people that the "balanced budget" ideology is just a cover to cut the guts out of every entitlement and safety-net program; to revert to block grants and the concept of "state's rights," where the states will do the dirty work, to make the working people and the poorest pay for all the crises of capitalism. In every major industrial state there are key races that need to be singled out for concentration. Everyone of the gang of 75 should be targeted for defeat.

For example, in New York, Susan Molinari needs to be defeated. Outside of term limits, she has voted for every provision of the Contract. The defeat of her father last November in his bid for District Attorney of Staten Island is a very positive sign. Molinari can be defeated.

Same goes for the anti-OSHA head of the House Economic and Education Opportunities Committee, Bill Gooding of Pennsylvania. He is under severe attack by labor, and he is warning other Republicans from unionized districts to be wary of voting for bills opposed by organized labor. He said, "If we

could get 1996 behind us, maybe we could get some work done." Arch-conservative Henry Hyde of Illinois is being challenged by a liberal who is a member of Democratic Socialists of America.

There are key races in every state that need our help in building united, anti-Contract alliances. The slogan should be "No independence without independence from the Contract."

Conferences to decide on candidates and tactics are in order, as are forums, teach-ins and town hall meetings. It is of great importance that the upsurge of demonstrations against the Contract be continued and increased right up to the elections. Already there have been some good actions at the homes of key members of the "Gang."

Our Party must enter this fight on all cylinders, in high gear. Fielding Communist candidates has to be decided in the context of the number one priority of defeating the Republicans. Our candidates should run in harmony with the efforts of the broad, anti-Contract alliances. We should not take any action that interferes with defeating Republicans.

In the past we were able to raise the question of running Communist candidates in all districts. We cannot do this for the coming elections. This is a new, unprecedented situation for us. There are electable Democrats. We have to help find them. Jesse Jackson, Jr., is an example of the kind of Democrat who can win.

The third-party movement must not abstain from participation. A broad-based united electoral coalition that succeeds in defeating the most anti-working-class, racist elements will give new impetus to the third party movement. A third party cannot be built separate from the immediate fight to defeat the ultra-right and its program.

This means that organizations such as Labor Party Advocates cannot sit on the sidelines in the elections and still be considered a serious, credible, viable movement. Every vote the Green Party's candidate Ralph Nader gets is a vote for the Republicans.

By acting to defeat the "Gang of 75" we are laying the groundwork for electoral victories in 1997, in 1998 when 36 governors and state legislatures are up and for the year 2,000, when a progressive third Party candidate could run.

BUILDING A NEW, MASS PARTY ■ The building of a mass Communist Party is also related to the struggle against the Contract on the American people.

The concept of a mass Communist Party is a

response to the anti-people nature of the Contract. New comrades are recruited based on the Party's program of struggle against the Contract.

People who are joining see the Party as an important force in the struggle against the effects of the Contract. Not to see and understand the question of building a mass Communist Party in this period is not to understand the effects of the Republican Contract.

Not to understand the need and possibilities of building a mass Communist Party is not to understand the readiness of people to fight the Contract.

Not to understand the need and possibility of building a mass Communist Party is not to understand the crisis of capitalism, not to understand the effects and the meaning of mass layoffs, like the 48,000 being laid off by AT&T.

Not to understand the need and the possibilities of building a mass Communist Party is not to understand the role of the Communist Party in this period. Not to understand this is living in the past.

Our priority on the '96 elections does not negate continuing to build a new, mass Communist Party. Just the opposite. It should be impossible to separate our electoral work in helping to find anti-Contract candidates and initiating anti-Contract coalitions and building the Communist Party. We will have unlimited opportunities in our day-to-day activities to transform people's anger and protest, their alienation from the two parties, into a Communist perspective, a socialist consciousness.

The turning point nature and potential of this moment for example, in labor, the electoral and political field opens up tremendous possibilities for a much bigger Party. And, only a much bigger Party can take full advantage of the potential of this moment.

By doing public, mass recruiting we are declaring that the CPUSA is a legitimate political organization. We are paving the way for masses of people to consider membership in the Party to be a natural and normal, even wonderful thing. Some of the calls and letters tell us just that. "I am proud to be a Communist. Please accept me in the Party and I promise to do all I can to organize here," says an African American coal miner in a letter with his membership application.

With public mass recruiting we are saying that the Communist Party's program has solutions for now, for today's problems, especially for fighting

the Contract. And when thousands of people sign cards at our tables they add to this because they prove that masses agree with those solutions and with our being part of the mainstream political scene.

Basically what we are saying is that at this moment in history just about anyone could become a Communist. But this new way of building our membership takes a lot of effort and changes.

For starters, it is a lot more work for us. It means making greater efforts to contact and consolidate new members, to explain and discuss things in popular ways, without using comfortable "in-house" language. It means having lots of short-term goals and projects. It means activity and protest. It means being more sociable, having more cultural and social events, like dances and parties.

We have to change ourselves, our ways of doing things so that people who are not Communists when they join will feel comfortable in the process of becoming Communists. It should be one of the richest experiences in a new comrade's life - growing into a mature Communist.

Our Convention should be one of the most exciting, most wonderful Party-YCL experiences for our new members. The form and content of our Convention must be consciously planned to make new members feel completely at home in their new political and social home.

I think we achieved that in our Holiday Party, where new members and veterans, Black, Brown and white joined together in celebration of a new, mass Party. For many it was their first Party event. For us it was inspiring and a confirmation of the need to bring new members closer with social events.

Some of the resistance to building a new mass Party has to do with comrades' fears about what it will take to develop new people with little or no experience into Communists. There's a lack of confidence that we can make the science of Marxism-Leninism understandable, teachable. We have to show comrades that our science can be taught in clear, simple, popular ways.

People are joining in large numbers because there is a mass change in consciousness, in thinking patterns. But we are not yet fully convinced of this. Why? There are various reasons. But they are all in one way or another related to ideological weaknesses. For example, if you don't understand or see the basics how capitalism works, exploitation, surplus

value, why the working class is the revolutionary class then you won't have confidence that there will be the mass change in consciousness that must come about to win the fight for socialism.

After all, that's what we're all about: overthrowing the system of capitalism and replacing it with socialism. That's why we recruit. It's why we have to build a mass Party, especially among workers.

Perhaps too many of us don't see this, or don't understand it deeply enough. There are still questions about what it is and means. Perhaps we need a Party-wide educational campaign aimed at the entire membership.

We also need to give special thought to building a recruiting campaign with and through our new members, in their work places and communities. New members make some of the best recruiters. The response to our new publication *Party Life* is an indication of how the new members think about the Party. Here's one from Phoenix about the December 1995 issue.

As a new member I appreciate the fact that the Party is concerned enough about new members to provide a whole publication for them. Overall, I am proud to be a member of the Communist Party and will not hide it. I love the Party even more than my family. Every time I write about the Party I get emotional.

An example of how the infusion of new members affects the Party atmosphere was seen at our annual Holiday Party. Little did we know that in many ways we would never be the same after this event.

For all of us it was inspiring, but for new members and friends it brought home the essence of our Party. Over 400 Black, white and Brown, of all ages, youth and seniors and veterans gathered to celebrate together. For the first time many new members joined us. Over 400 crowded into our auditorium where C-SPAN was to record the event that would be seen by millions.

C-SPAN ■ Last week we sent every club a letter about C-SPAN. For the Communist Party, USA the mass response to C-SPAN is perhaps the biggest, the most exciting event in many a year – which is really saying something since we have had some pretty exciting happenings, like the 75th anniversary, which C-SPAN also taped and showed. Although we didn't have an 800 number then, we

still got calls.

Well comrades, this time the word historic just won't do it justice.

The purpose of the letter from the National Board to all the clubs was to convince the Party, based on the C-SPAN experience, that we are going to be a mass Party – ready or not.

The entire speech and predictions, displaying our new 800 number, was scheduled to air only twice on Saturday evening, January 6th. When we called C-SPAN to ask if they planned to show it again and asked them to, they said they had no such plans. More than likely they got lots of phone requests because they showed it *four* more times on Sunday, January 7th.

C-SPAN says they reach about 30 million, nationally and worldwide. Many were getting the show during prime-time hours, like 9:00 PM in New York City. There are areas that don't get C-SPAN, but we get calls from people who told us they heard about it from someone else who saw it. So, it's impossible to estimate how many millions, here and abroad, saw and heard our message.

I doubt anyone got the letter yet, but I want to give you just some quotes from the letter to serve as an up-to-date report on C-SPAN for discussion here today:

As soon as Gus got into his speech and the 800 number was shown, the phones started ringing off the hook and for over two hours and after the midnight showing, two comrades were "snowed under" with calls, while the blizzard swirled outside.

Unfortunately, because we didn't expect a "blizzard," we only prepared for "flurries." Only two comrades were at the lit-up switchboard, which can only get 5 calls at a time. To handle such a huge volume we needed a team of comrades and probably a much updated phone system.

We have to self-critically say that if we had acted based on our recent assessment of the new anger and militancy, the new mood and thought patterns, the disgust with the two-Party system, with the government and even the whole social system, if we were convinced deeply enough of the potential of our concept of a mass Party, the Executive and Organization Department would have organized for a mass response. But we didn't. We organized for "some" calls. And we estimate now that perhaps many hundreds tried to call and

couldn't get through. We think we missed at least half the calls, maybe more. The answering machine ran out of tape, so we missed calls that came in when the office was closed during the blizzard.

We still have to analyze what it was about the speech that struck such a deep chord in so many. Most said they agreed with everything in the speech. They were surprised and delighted to know that we exist, that our politics reflect so much of what they think and feel, that we were willing to send them literature. Many asked to join.

The fantastic response proves everything we have been saying. It means we tapped into the mood and thinking of many, many people from all over the country. We spoke directly to the needs and fears of people about what terrible things will happen to their lives if the "Contract" is in their futures.

In the speech, I tried to describe in popular language the basics of our ideology, our positions on issues, on the "Contract," on the elections, on capitalism expressing optimism and confidence about winning a better life now and socialism in the future. I tried to give sort of a crash course in class struggle, in Marxism-Leninism.

And, there was a mass response. Perhaps that is the most basic, elementary meaning of a "mass" Party that it simply means masses responding to our ideology and programs by joining us.

Two weeks after the show first aired, we are still getting calls daily. And the letters are starting to pour in. It takes a certain political level, courage determination and guts to call the Communist Party national headquarters to ask for information, and even more to ask about joining the Party. People know our phones are tapped. Callers and writers are of all ages, mainly workers but also students, unemployed, professionals. They are Black, Brown and white. Many are from the South. Some are amazed that we exist.

RESPONSES FROM CALLERS ■ One caller said "So glad to see and hear you. God bless the Communist Party." Another said, "I never considered myself a Communist. But when I heard Gus Hall I realized that's exactly what I am." Another, "I always considered myself a federalist. Now I consider myself a Red federalist." Another, "It is so good to hear Gus. I remember Harry Bridges and the Party. So I called to say I'm glad you are still

out there."

Another, "I remember my Daddy and my ex-husband used to talk about Gus Hall. Well, I guess they were right." Many callers said they never heard a Communist speak before. A caller from Minnesota said, "You know, Gus Hall is from up this way. We're very proud of Gus Hall up here." Another said, "I notice you have the same address for *Political Affairs*, the *People's Weekly World* and the Party. Would it be all right if I use the same envelope for my two subscriptions and my Party membership application card?"

People said they were amazed and happy to learn that we are active in struggles and movements all over the country, and have become a growing influence on developments, especially in the trade union movement. Many workers who called said they are trade unionists and some asked for our support.

The hundreds of calls we've gotten are already on a special, computerized, C-SPAN contact list. All have already received a letter signed by me with a packet of literature, the Holiday Speech, a membership application and a 3 month gift-trial sub to the *PWW*.

In the beginning we heard from 38 states. But now, we are almost sure we have heard from all the United States and Puerto Rico. It is very interesting that so many are from the South and from smaller cities and towns.

We think the C-SPAN experience is so important that we asked the districts and clubs to call special meetings. We told the comrades that as soon as we get the video tape copied, we will send one to each district. We asked the districts and clubs to discuss how to use it at district and club meetings, but also to organize meetings of friends and contacts, followed by refreshments and a discussion of the ideas in the speech. It can be a wonderful recruiting tool.

We asked districts to work on getting the tape on cable networks in their areas. Major network TV costs are prohibitive, but we have had some success in getting on cable. And cable reaches millions, too.

To get a full picture on recruiting we have to add that in addition to C-SPAN, the tabling and street-corner recruiting, we have been getting lots of letters from people asking for information and to join, also many from the South. People are also joining on the Internet by e-mail.

In the envelopes to the district organizers we

enclosed a list of the callers in their districts. These are mainly working-class and racially and nationally oppressed people. It is clear from talking to them that these are politically savvy folks. As one caller said, "I was taught you were the bad guys all my life. Now I find out you're the good guys." Also, all gave us over the telephone their name, address and telephone numbers.

We have also had some discussion on sending a few teams to the South to visit the callers and those who have written. It would electrify the Convention if we could bring in a re-established Party in the deep South.

The C-SPAN response should play a big role in convincing the whole Party that we are right on the mark, that our concept of a "new, mass Party" is where it's at. It should help put to rest all questions and doubts about the viability of our concept of a mass Party.

FEARING NEW MEMBERS □ Unfortunately, and perhaps naturally, there are still some comrades who are afraid of new members, especially new members in big numbers, afraid of a "mass" Party and all that means. Comrades still resist the changes that are necessary to win and keep new members. There are comrades, even leading comrades, who ask questions like: "What does it mean, 'mass Party,' what does it mean organizationally, structurally, constitutionally?"

There is nothing wrong with raising these questions. This is the time to raise them. But there is something wrong when they are framed in thinly veiled accusations that the Party leadership is abandoning Marxism-Leninism, that it is violating the Party constitution, destroying our organizational structure and lowering Party standards and discipline.

For example, in a pre-convention piece, a comrade frames his discussion this way,

Over the past 12 months, especially during the so-called "mass recruitment drive," there has been a deliberate and concerted approach by the National Board to treat the CPUSA constitution with contempt and disdain, to promote a loosening of Party organization on all fronts, from the club level to the national convention. Serious Party building and recruitment efforts have been abandoned in deference to an illusory "get rich quick" scheme of signing up complete strangers on the street. Nowhere has this policy resulted in substantial gains; instead, the

net result has been to divert the Party from its mass tasks while breeding cynicism among the Party membership about building our Party.

This paragraph, only one of many in the same vein, is filled with lies and distortions and straw men.

Honest, sincere questions about a mass Party – and there are those – are framed in an open, above-board manner, above all in a comradely tone of sincerely wanting answers to real questions.

When questions are posed in an arrogant and accusatory tone, it precludes open, honest and constructive criticism. Nowhere in the writings of this comrade is there any self-criticism. An article of this comrade's will be published – with a response.

This is not the kind of pre-Convention discussion that we need to debate out questions in an open and honest way.

Posing questions couched in a barrage of distortions and outright lies is not giving pre-convention discussion leadership.

There are many questions we can't answer. But there are many we can. And we have been answering, starting with the last National Committee meeting.

We know we will have to look, and we have been looking, at our structure, at our Constitution, for example, to insure that every new member can be included in every aspect of Party life. We have set up a Constitution committee. Proposals for changes will be presented to the National Convention.

We know we will have to change our club meetings to make them more interesting, more lively, more action oriented. We do know that we will have to give priority to classes and education for new members. We know we will have to establish new organizations in the South and Southeast. In many ways this may be easier than bringing new members into long-existing clubs that have hesitations and doubts about new members.

A big part of the problem is fear of the new, the big, the unknown; fear of change and flexibility. The standard for publication in pre-convention publications is that we will not publish material that is anti-working class, racist, anti-Semitic, chauvinistic, male supremacist or anti-Party. We will adhere to these principles and guidelines for pre-convention discussion.

Then, there are the "doubting Thomases" who

simply don't believe it is all really happening. Are we exaggerating? Well, check it out. Just call and visit the names on the list of callers from your area. More than anything else that will teach us not only what's happening but how much we have to change.

From now till the Convention, our focus, our political center of gravity, should be on bringing a mass Party into the convention, a mass Party including newly organized and reestablished organizations. How to do this has to include raising the funds to make it possible, both to bring new people and to make a *big* convention possible. So far, we have only enough for a minimum size that would not reflect the new Communist Party.

A "PLUS" LEADERSHIP FOR A MASS PARTY ■ Comrades, if there is such a thing as *the* perfect moment for our "Communist plus" it is *now*. That's precisely how we will continue to build our mass Party because C-SPAN should be the final proof that it is the Communist plus that people are drawn to. So we have to perfect the plus in this new stage of the transition to a mass Party.

The plus today means we integrate the struggles on the level of reforms with the ideas and concepts related to a more advanced, revolutionary level of struggle and a Communist outlook.

Remember this?

The plus means that a strike in a single shop is related to the struggles in all of the shops or plants of a corporation; is related to the class struggle; is related to the revolutionary struggle to do away with the system of class exploitation with a system of non-exploitation, with socialism. The plus is the basic truth about capitalism that makes socialism inevitable.

We are doing so much better on the plus and that's why we are doing better on mass recruiting. It means we are more willing and able to be more Communist than ever before. We can reach masses faster and more deeply because of the objective situation and radical changes in mass thought patterns. We could use a slogan that would popularize the following concept: "Building a new mass Party with the Communist plus."

Which leads me into the question of leadership; a new kind of leadership for a mass, revolutionary Party of the working class. This question is now on the stage of objective reality. We have to define a

new leadership – in form and content – as we lead masses, because it is a brand new question for us. It is a hands-on process.

As we change and grow, I think we have to keep in mind that right now our Party has a higher level of collectivity and higher standards of behavior and discipline than any other working-class organization, including unions.

That said a new stage in the building of a mass Party means eliminating some old weaknesses, as fast as we can. We are in a completely new ballgame now. New members and friends and co-workers have higher expectations of us, different expectations, standards and needs to fulfill. New comrades don't become disciplined Marxist-Leninist Communists by osmosis. People don't rise to Party standards by osmosis. But if we are a model leadership, if we set an example, comrades will develop faster than we can imagine.

Already we have reports from districts that show the new members are often more on the ball, including discipline and recruiting, than seasoned comrades. Collective work is even more critical because a mass Party means the same number of cadre have to do more, much more. And do it faster and better. And our work does not yet measure up. Especially because our Convention is less than two months away. And we still have much to do to make it all it can be.

We need to discuss the functioning of our collectives. Because we have too many that don't function, don't even meet. Also, a leadership of a new mass Party with mass needs sees finances differently. We have to save money and spend money and raise money better and differently. For example, in December we used \$70,000 out of our Funds for operating expenses. We can't build a solid, financial base for a mass Party by spending funds that should be making money for us.

We have to reach for a higher level of theoretical and ideological understanding. And the ability to explain it simply to new members and potential new members. To convey our science popularly we have to attain a higher level of understanding ourselves. □

Draft Resolution on the Struggle for Equality

African American Equality Commission

The battle for African American equality today occurs at a time of sharpening class struggle, a moment of upsurge in the working-class and peoples movements. The labor movement is at a turning point and the African American equality movement is gaining renewed strength and momentum as they confront the common ruling-class enemy. All across the country a new social movement is being born on strike picketlines and in mass demonstrations against the Contract on America.

Indeed, the fight to defeat the Contract on America and the ultra-right, fascist-tinged forces that it represents has emerged as the central task of the times.

The Contract on America is racist and anti-working-class to the core. It is affecting all aspects of life in our country. The Contract's proposals to dismantle welfare, Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, deregulate big business, break unions, and destroy the environment will leave no one untouched.

The Contract is the blueprint to reverse the combined gains of the Civil Rights period and the New Deal. Defeating it is key to achieving social progress in all areas. It is key to defending the rights of labor, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, women and youth, preserving the environment, defending immigrant rights, and maintaining democracy. It is key to fighting racism – the Contract on America is *The Bell Curve* in legislative form.

There can be no effective fight against racism without defeating the Contract. Saving welfare is the first line of defense in this battle. If welfare goes, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are sure to follow.

The main obstacle to the struggle for African American equality today is the ultra-right Republican lynch mob dominating the Senate and the House of Representatives. Their defeat and preventing the Republicans from gaining control of the White House must be considered strategic tasks. There can be no progress in the struggle for African American equality without removing these forces from power and breaking their grip on the Con-

gress.

The growing fightback against the Contract and its growing unity makes such a defeat possible. Achieving this great objective will require a broad all-peoples movement led by labor, a movement in which the African American people have been and remain a vital, indeed critical component.

The Contract's deeply ingrained racism is but a symptom of the inherent institutionalized racism of monopoly capitalism. In fact it is the sharpest expression of the ruling class's racist offensive. The Contract on America's provisions for social engineering by manipulating African American and Latino birth rates, gives ruling-class racism genocidal features.

Racism was born out of capitalism and remains deeply embedded in the political, economic and social fabric of the nation.

Racism is a ruling-class ideology that preaches the doctrine of white supremacy and the inferiority of peoples of African descent and all non-white peoples. Racism is the ruling-class method of extracting extra profits from all workers by means of the wage gap and pitting one section of the working class against another. Racism is the systemic oppression and discrimination directed against entire peoples based on the color of their skin, the texture of their hair, their language and culture.

Racism is a system of barbaric practices and institutions that perpetuate segregated housing, unequal schools, inferior health care, and gross discrimination in the criminal justice system.

In response to mass anti-racist struggles the code words for racism have changed. In today's language, "Black crime," "the under-class," "feminization of poverty," and "culture of poverty," replace the more blatant racist phrases of the past. However, while the forms have changed, racism's deadly essence remains the same.

A starting point in understanding the dynamics of the struggle for African American equality today must be the situation confronting Black workers, for African Americans are an overwhelmingly working-class people. Some 90 percent of all Black people

make their daily bread as wage earners. Close to half of all Black men are employed in industry along with 15 percent of Black women. Thirty three percent of all Black women are employed in the service industry. One-third of all African Americans are employed by government – local, state, or federal.

ON THE ORIGINS OF OPPRESSION ■ African American workers face unique and special forms of oppression by U.S. monopoly capitalism based on class, race and nationality. This exploitation has produced an oppression of a particular kind, where class exploitation is combined with discrimination based on race and nationality.

This oppression has its origins in slavery, the abolition of which required a civil war and cost countless lives in which former slaves paid their share fighting for freedom. Yet even when emancipation was won, Black Americans were subjected to a century of slave-like servitude without the basic rights of citizenship. Formally free but in fact enslaved, Black people lived half slave half free, of but not allowed in the body politic of the evolving U.S. nation. African Americans thus evolved as a national minority forcibly suppressed and denied basic democratic rights.

As a consequence, the struggle for democratic rights, civil rights, the right to vote, to attend integrated schools, and the right to join trade unions occupied center stage until the back of legal segregation was broken.

The denial of political rights had its origin in the system of slavery and the economic oppression of the African American population, once mainly rural and agrarian, now urban and working-class. But the system of class, racial and national oppression begun on the plantation continued into the factory gate.

Thus, the root of all forms of inequality must be looked for in the economic exploitation of capitalism. Economic racism is the basis for all forms of racism. It is here that inequality begins giving rise to a whole system of racist oppression. The basis for African American inequality today lies in the racist wage gap, in the lower wages paid Black workers, in their superexploitation. Some \$60 billion a year in extra profit are extracted from Black workers based on this racist wage gap.

Today a fundamental issue in the struggle for equality is closing the racist wage gap. Black workers make almost a third less than their fellow work-

ers. The struggle for equality, to be truly meaning must address itself to closing this gap. There can be no talk of achieving real equality without it.

The general decline in living standards of the last quarter century of all workers has affected African Americans particularly severely. This is because racism is built into the capitalist economic structure. In each downturn of the economy, the law of "last hired, first fired or laid off" goes into effect. Because of employer racism, Black workers are unable to find other jobs when the economy picks up – they become the permanently unemployed. With each new cyclical downturn, the pattern repeats itself with the force of an iron law of capitalism. With each new downturn new victims are thrown into the growing ranks of the unemployed. As the economic crisis intensifies, so does the effect of economic racism.

The steadily downward spiral of U.S. capitalism, combined with economic racism, has led to higher and higher levels of unemployment. African American unemployment has remained twice the national average for several decades. However, over the last quarter century it has increased to two and a half times that of whites. Close to half of Black youth are unemployed and over half of all Black children grow up in poverty.

SOCIAL CRISIS ■ The crisis of unemployment has combined with other factors to produce a vast social crisis in the African American community. Poverty is steadily growing, the drug crisis has reached epidemic proportions and diseases like AIDS are claiming the lives of thousands. AIDS – now fundamentally a disease of poverty – claims the lives of one in three Black men between the ages of 20 and 45 and is growing rapidly among African Americans.

Due to continuing racist practices by banks and other lending institutions, residential segregation has deepened over the last quarter century. Trapped in the urban hypersegregated ghettos of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles among others, where jobs are scarce and resources few, larger and larger sections of the African American community, particularly youth, are forced to live marginal lives. Criminalized, poorly educated, jobless and almost devoid of the hope of ever being employed, they are consigned by capitalism to what Marx called a "social death," without the bare essentials of making it in the dog-eat-dog world of the capitalist marketplace.

The inherent racism of the U.S. capitalist system is most dramatically revealed by the crisis facing young Black men and women. The U.S. ruling class has criminalized young African American men. The racist mass media has portrayed young Black men as a gang element, an inherently criminal "under-class" an object of fear and loathing to be controlled and policed. Police departments routinely and indiscriminately prey on young African American men, in many cases arresting without cause or due process. Today one in three Black young men are under the control of the criminal justice system, up from one in four just a short time ago.

Young Black women are continually portrayed as sexually promiscuous "welfare mothers," and as the main source of "teenaged pregnancies." "Female-headed households" has become a code-word for African American women, replacing "the Black matriarch" in the phraseology of ruling-class racism. Black women are described as the source of the "crisis" in the Black family and as a parasitic drag on society. Thus, in addition to the burden of discrimination based on race, nationality, and class, Black women face the additional problem of male supremacy.

"PROBLEMETIZING" A PEOPLE ■ The social crisis facing the African American community is not due to internal causes, it is not a crisis arising from within the Black community. Nor is it a crisis of "family values," or a crisis of the "Black family." All such descriptions stem from the ruling class's racist attempt to "problematize" a people and make them scapegoats. Instead of a people facing problems, African Americans are presented as *the* problem. All such portrayals must be completely rejected no matter what their source. African Americans are not, nor have they ever been, the problem. African Americans, as a people, are facing problems – problems created by 400 years of capitalist exploitation and institutionalized racism.

Just as the problems faced by African Americans do not arise from within the Black community, so too resources to solve these problems will not be found internally. Real solutions must in the first place base themselves on addressing the problems of the poorest half of the African American community, those living at or near the poverty line. The basic issue here is addressing the question of jobs. Providing well-paying jobs at union or prevailing wages with affirmative action is the bottom-line

basis for even beginning to struggle for real equality. At this stage of the struggle, the winning of a jobs program would be a major milestone on the road to achieving real freedom.

The federal government must be forced to create such jobs. A massive federally funded jobs program along the lines suggested by the Martinez and Delums jobs bills would be a major step in the right direction.

STRATEGIC POSITION ■ In spite of the ferocity of the racist offensive, the African American peoples' movement has waged and continues to wage a truly heroic battle for freedom and equality. Both during and after slavery, during the dark days of racist lynch terror following the betrayal of Reconstruction, during the efforts to found industrial unionism and throughout the Civil Rights movement beginning in the 1930s and through the '60s and since, Black people have waged a relentless battle for equality, dignity and respect. These struggles have played a major role in the history of our country and have helped shape the terrain on which the class struggle and the battle for democracy are presently waged.

The African American people today are uniquely poised to carry on the next stage in the struggle for full equality. Black people have a highly skilled and experienced pool of trade union, civil rights, peace, and political cadre seasoned in struggle. Black trade unionists have won important positions in major unions and now play significant roles in helping shape policy.

With the new leadership in the AFL-CIO there is potential this will continue to deepen. Today over 5000 Black elected officials – while still a far cry from what is needed – hold responsible positions at the local, state, and national levels. As a result of the Civil Rights victories and affirmative action, the number of Black scientists, doctors, engineers and technicians has risen, further strengthening the experience, know-how and fighting capacity of the people. Taken as a whole, African Americas far from being devastated and bowed by the severity of the crisis, are today in a strong strategic position to defend past victories and launch a new offensive.

The ruling class is well aware of this potential and has launched a fierce attack on the African American leadership. African American elected officials are continually harassed by federal, state, and local police agencies, and mass organizations like

the NAACP have been under a sharp assault. The aim of this offensive has been to decapitate the leadership and immobilize the mass organizations by embroiling them in internal struggles.

The attack on African American leadership and its organizations is but one front in a far wider theater of battle. Accompanying it is a double-edged legal assault on affirmative action and voting rights. The aim here is to reverse the gains by a process of gradually undermining the legal basis for special remedies. While serious setbacks have occurred in this important arena of struggle, a complete reversal has not occurred. Given the composition of the Supreme Court, legislative remedies must be relied on.

In this regard, independent political action will be a major arena of struggle in the next period. Defeating the ultra-right Republican hold on Congress and preventing them from gaining control of the White House must be seen as the most important short-term strategic electoral objective. No less important over the long-term is to continue laying the basis, working both inside and outside of the Democratic Party, to create a labor-led third party in which the African American people as a whole will play a key role.

Greater gains in the battle for full equality will be intimately linked to the class and mass struggles to create such a formation. Clearly this struggle must not only occur in the electoral sphere, but along all battlefronts – in the factories, streets and campuses of the nation. It is also clear that the demands of the African American people against racism, for affirmative action and for the full development of culture and national expression must occupy a high place in this general struggle.

LABOR/BLACK ALLIANCE ■ Building greater unity in the labor/African American alliance is critical to the success of this whole process. The birth and maturation of the labor/African American alliance is a brilliant chapter in the history of the U.S. working class and the class struggle. Born in the fight against the slavery and the Civil War, and extending into the great labor battles of the 1930s and '40s through the Civil Rights movement until today, the labor/African American alliance has been the foundation stone of working-class and peoples unity. In keeping with Marx's concept that labor in the white skin cannot be free so long as labor in the Black is branded – a concept that retains the force of social

law – the labor/African American alliance has been a bulwark in the fight against racism, for trade union and democratic rights.

Success in the war against slavery, in the struggle for the 8-hour day, in the founding of the great industrial unions, in the Civil Rights movement, would have been inconceivable without it. The battle cry "Black and white unite and fight" shouted on the picket lines of the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s echoes through the decades until today.

The newly formed coalition between the AFL-CIO and the National Black Baptist Convention for the purpose of organizing the unorganized is an important step in building this unity.

FIGHT FOR CLASS UNITY ■ The unity of the multi-racial, multi-national U.S. working class is in both the short-term and long-term interests of the African American people. Such unity must be built in common struggle against the ruling-class enemy, a struggle that must take into account and represent the unique and special demands of different sections of the class. The fight against racism, the closing of the racist wage gap, the fight for affirmative action and defending immigrant rights must take their rightful place in the new drives to organize the unorganized, defeat NAFTA, end forced overtime and contracting out, and to pass striker-replacement legislation.

Important victories in the fight against racism have been achieved although much remains undone. These victories have led to a rejection of the concept of racial superiority among a majority of Americans, white, Black, and Brown. This sentiment must be drawn upon and transformed into a material force capable of winning the next stage of the battle.

Given today's reality of the growing national and racial diversity of the U.S. working class, Black, Brown, and white must unite and fight the monopoly capitalist ruling class. "Black, Brown, and white unite and fight" must become the working class and trade union movement's slogan for the 21st Century. Such unity is a necessary condition for further advances.

Elements have arisen in the past and are currently seeking dominance in the African American movement that move against unity in struggle. Such forces push a separatist agenda, a go-it-alone strategy that sees solutions exclusively in the realm of Black capitalism. African Americans are urged to

pull themselves up by their bootstraps and pool their own resources. In the view of these elements, the reasons for the crisis in the African American community are to be found within the community itself. They urge "atonement" and "reconciliation" as a cure-all for past wrongs and as the first step toward redemption. Unity is urged within the Black community in the pursuit of these goals and against a common enemy which is described as white people in general and the Jewish people in particular. The chief purveyor for these views are Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

Seizing hold of the initiative taken by calling the Million Man March – a tremendous and historic outpouring of African American men in the face of the racist offensive – Farrakhan and his followers are attempting to impose a conservative petty-bourgeois agenda in the Black community. They attempt to do so by giving their right-wing outlook a militant and even radical face. While the form appears militant, the essence is deeply reactionary.

Go-it-alone strategies are dead-end streets leading nowhere in struggle. Today the class outlook of some nationalist business elements in the Black community coincides with the orientation of the Republican right. This is the reason for their support of the concepts of the Contract, policies that are a clear accommodation to racism and that will ultimately betray the people.

Their use of anti-Semitism is a diversion that only serves the real enemy – monopoly capital. Anti-Semitism is not endemic to the African American community. The concept of "Black anti-Semitism" must be completely rejected. These are hostile ideas imported from outside to serve enemy interests.

BLACK CAPITALISM ■ The program of Black capitalism put forward by these forces cannot solve the problems of African Americans, even though the demands of Black business against discrimination are part of the anti-racist and anti-monopoly struggle.

"Self-help" recipes, "pool your own resources" programs, "buy Black" schemes, "do for self" formulas, will not substantially alter the crisis of living faced by the vast majority of working-class African Americans. While sounding attractive these proposals do not even begin to address the issue of acquiring the material wherewithal to really grapple with the severity of the crisis. Such proposals, while

seeming to address the economic crisis and unemployment, are in actual fact a diversion from real solutions.

Pooling your own resources and buying Black doesn't even begin to address the magnitude of the problem. You cannot nickel and dime your way to freedom.

By emphasizing the demands of Black businessmen to the exclusion of all others, the requirements of the working-class and poor majority are pushed to the sidelines. A debate over program and platform is sure to result.

Because these demands reflect the platform of only a small minority, they will not sustain a mass basis and are doomed to failure. The overwhelming majority of African Americans will respond to a program that reflects their immediate day-to-day survival interests, a program for jobs, housing, national health care, free quality education, and eliminating the racist wage gap.

Such a program, of course, coincides with the needs of all working-class Americans linking the struggle for equality with the anti-monopoly demands of the vast majority of Americans. The basic interests of the struggle for equality today merge with the struggle of all Americans against the big corporations. Special demands for affirmative action and measures to ensure equal representation in government constitute an inseparable part of this fight.

ROLE OF EQUALITY STRUGGLE ■ The struggle for African American equality has always played a critical role in the great class and democratic battles of our country. Throughout our history the struggle for full equality has always advanced the interests of the working class generally. Gains in the struggle for equality have led to gains for all working people.

The fate of African Americans is inextricably linked to the struggles of the working class and the labor movement in general. At the same time, building the fighting unity and capacity of the working class has depended on championing the fight against racism and opposing the racial and national oppression of Black people as well as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native American Indians and Asians.

The struggle for African American equality retains a dynamic, working-class, democratic and even revolutionary character. In today's conditions,

for the equality movement to achieve real gains the monopoly capitalist corporations must be taken on. This requires the unity of all forces, Black, Brown, and white that have an interest in defeating monopoly.

A NEW MASS COMMUNIST PARTY ■ The building of a mass Communist Party among African Americans must be seen as urgent requirement. The Communist Party has a long and proud history in the African American community, a history it wears as a badge of honor. From the fight to free the Scottsboro defendants, the struggle for political representation, the struggle to integrate baseball, the organization of the unorganized, the civil rights battles of the '30s, '40s, and '50s through today the Communist Party has been in the front ranks of the struggle for equality. As a result, some of the best sons and daughters of the African American people have joined our ranks, including Ben Davis, William Patterson, Henry Winston, Claudia Jones, and W.E.B. Du Bois. The Communist Party cherishes their great political and ideological legacy.

The building of a mass Communist Party among African Americans would be of great significance and would give an enormous boost to the cause of full equality. A mass Party in the African American community would help elevate the fight for the leading role of Black workers in the equality movement, an urgent requirement for advancing program, platform and strategy.

A mass Party would greatly enhance the possibility of greater fighting unity in struggle. It would strengthen the fight for political independence and a third labor-based people's party. A mass Party would elevate the struggle for full political representation.

Most importantly, a mass Party would make possible a successful effort to organize the victims of the crisis, a need that will increase dramatically as the the Contract on America is implemented. Organizing this fightback and drawing the labor movement into it is becoming an urgent need of the times.

As recent experience has shown, Communist initiative and leadership is needed to bring this struggle to a higher level.

The basis for a mass Party among African Americans is greater than it has ever been before. This has been proven beyond doubt by the mass recruiting. Conditions are ripe - overripe - for

building the Party among African Americans. The responsibility for doing so must be taken up by the entire Party.

Activating the new members in the struggle against the Contract is the way to ensure their consolidation into the fighting ranks of the Party. The building of the Party among African Americans and Black workers in particular is an urgent requirement of the times. The building of such a Party is of revolutionary significance.

Part of building the Party and its influence must include building an organized left current in the Black community, particularly among Black workers.

On the occasion of its 26th National Convention the Communist Party reiterates its unshakable belief in and commitment to the cause of full equality. The Communist Party reiterates its belief that the fight against racism can be won. Moreover, the Communist Party reaffirms its belief that the working class, Black, Brown, and white will lead and win that fight. The Communist Party upholds the view that in fighting for this great cause it advances the cause of all working people. Significant strides toward achieving full equality are still winnable.

SOCIALISM ■ The Communist Party also restates its deep conviction in socialism and its great liberating potential, a conviction founded in science and in the experience of the international working-class movement. Socialism will lay the basis for eliminating racism and all forms of racial and national oppression. Socialism will eliminate economic racism and the basic cause for all other forms of racism.

Socialism USA will make equality the law of the land and will outlaw all forms of racism and bigotry. A socialist U.S. would make affirmative action with quotas the law of the land. Our "Bill of Rights" socialism would make full representation in all governmental bodies a constitutional requirement. Socialism would protect and promote the culture and heritage of all peoples as a national treasure.

As the sun goes down on the 20th Century and a new century dawns, the Communist Party looks to the future of the struggle for equality with a sense of confidence and optimism - confidence in our class and people's ability to lead these struggles and optimism that new victories will be won. □

Criminalization of African Americans

Victor Perlo

In the 20th century, the century of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, the United States became the crime capital of the world of developed capitalism. Along with the marauding, murdering Marines, naval forces, and armies in victim countries in Latin America and Asia, the internal armies of repression, police and FBI, together with their judges and prosecutors carried out an increasingly intense assault on the working class as a whole. From the very beginning, this assault had an extraordinarily sharp edge against the African American people.

Criminal gangs, often in collaboration with police, became major plunderers in the cities, extracting heavy tribute from small business, serving the more powerful capitalists by strikebreaking, imposing their agents in controlling positions in many trade unions and gaining influence in the capitalist political parties while engaging in murderous warfare over the division and redivision of territory for plunder. They became the major agencies for the import and distribution of narcotic drugs and organizers of prostitution. White-collar crime became endemic in the financial world, plundering billions, with only occasional token arrests and fines, more rarely imprisonment. Corruption in government became general, highlighted in recent decades by the involvement of presidents and their immediate entourage.

Crime rose and fell inversely with the business cycle, as people desperate for food and other basic needs, not organized for political struggle, engaged in criminal activities. The rate of homicides jumped from 0.5 per 100,000 people in 1900 to 9.7 per 100,000 in 1933 – the nadir of the great Depression receding to 4.5 per 100,000 with economic recovery, before rising again during the structural crisis of capitalism to 10.7 per 100,000 in 1980. The rate has remained in that range ever since, even during years of economic upsurge and boom, signifying a deterioration in the situation.¹

RACISM IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM ■ The legal code applied against African Americans is much more stringent than against the rest of the population, a degree of discrimination more extreme than in any other aspect of life. For example, researchers find that 13 percent of Blacks, like 13 percent of whites, are regular users of narcotic drugs. But a Black user is four times more likely to be arrested than a white; eight times more likely to be convicted; and 19 times more likely to be imprisoned!

Imprisonment for drug use has been rising at astronomical rates. But if Black users were imprisoned at the same rate as other users, total imprisonment for drug use would be slashed 70 percent and most of the new prisons being built at breakneck speed would not be needed.

If African Americans are excluded, others – who are 87 percent of the population – comprise only 26 percent of those imprisoned for drugs.

The number of arrests in the United States – 320,000 in 1933 – leaped to 6.25 million in 1970 and to 10.5 million in 1991. Throughout this period, the absolute number of white people arrested was two-and-a-half to three times the number of Black people arrested.

Typically, in 1991, 69 percent of those arrested were white, 29 percent were Black.² Since a Black is much more likely than a white to be arrested, regardless of criminality, the percentage of actual criminals who are Black must be far less than that.

Referred to here are the kinds of crimes for which arrests are normally made. That excludes the systematic bribing of officials for contracts, the forced payoffs to inspectors to prevent condemnation of buildings, the Mafia-organized collection of tribute from proprietors in a wide range of businesses as a condition of avoiding arson, bombings, murder, and the notorious widespread corruption of police forces. It also excludes white-collar crime, peaking at such outrages as the savings and loan bailout, which cost taxpayers at least \$150 billion. It also excludes crime among government officials.

African Americans have a very small part in these areas because they are so excluded from the decisive positions of power in the private economy,

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and in government, i.e., from the capitalist class and its leading circles.

PATTERNS OF IMPRISONMENT ■ Through the combination of lying police witnesses, racist judges and prosecutors, incompetent or venal "public defenders" on whom Black prisoners are usually forced to rely, a Black arrestee is more than twice as likely to end up in prison as a white arrestee. As a result, the inmate population of the country's jails and prisons is 47 percent of African Americans (roughly four times their share in the population), 14 percent Hispanics (one-and-a-half to two times their share in the population), and 37 percent whites (roughly one-half their share in the population).³ This means that a Black individual is eight times more likely than a white individual to be in jail. Thus the impact of mass imprisonment on the Black communities – and also on Hispanic communities – is of a qualitatively higher order of magnitude. And that impact has grown in severity with the surge in imprisonments of the past two decades.

The anti-labor, racist offensive of the past two decades has led to a sharp increase in imprisonment of working-class people, most intensely affecting Black and Latino communities. Between 1970 and 1991 the number of people confined to state prisons multiplied four times, with the rate of increase accelerating after 1980, when the Reagan administration came to power.⁴

During this period the number of Black inmates increased at a much faster rate than white inmates. Between 1983 and 1991 the number of white inmates increased by 46 percent, of Black inmates by 114 percent, and Latino inmates by 94 percent.⁵

The following table shows the percentage distribution of the inmate population, at 20 year intervals.

In 1930, Blacks were less than one-fourth of the prison population. The proportion increased

Year	White	Black	Other	Hispanics
1930	76.7	22.4	0.9	
1950	69.1	29.7	1.2	
1970	60.5	35.8	3.7	
1991	49.1	47.3	3.5	
1991*	37.1	45.3	3.5	14.0

* Hispanics separated.

Source: 1930-1970, Hacker, P. 197

1991 Statistical Abstract 1993, No. 344, p. 210

steadily, but most rapidly after 1970. While the overall prison population increased about four times during those 21 years, the Black prison population multiplied 5.3 times. The rate of imprisonment of Blacks accelerated qualitatively, from very heavy, to mass imprisonment, as might apply to a people resisting an invading army. The intensity of imprisonment of African Americans in the United States exceeds that of Africans in a former apartheid South Africa, or Palestinians in territories seized by Israel.

Ruling-class propaganda tries to convince the public that the mass imprisonment of people, especially young men, is in response to a soaring crime wave. That is far from the truth. Between 1975 and 1991, the rate of reported crime, in relation to population and households, declined by 30 percent.⁶

STIFFER SENTENCING ■ The jamming of prisons resulted from a marked increase in severity of sentencing, including laws enacted on state and federal levels. "In the 1980s, draconian sentencing laws were used to combat the drug problem. Currently, 60 percent of inmates in federal prisons and 20 percent of inmates in state prisons are there on drug charges."⁷ A young Black arrested with a small amount of narcotics in his or her possession may end up with a long prison term, while the large-scale use of narcotics by the upper classes is generally ignored by the police and the courts.

During 1994, President Clinton gave top priority to passage of a far more rigorous "crime package," which Congress passed after the president exerted exceptional personal pressure on individual members of Congress. In this legislation a number of crimes were added to which the death penalty applied and funds for 100,000 more members of police forces were allocated. It as well rejected a provision that would have given opportunities for combatting the extreme discrimination against Black prisoners in application of the death penalty. As proposed by the president, the bill included modest provisions for social programs in high-crime areas, but these were mainly deleted from the law as adopted.

Meanwhile, successive administrations and Congresses were engaged in ruthlessly slashing social and economic programs that would provide needed services and, above all, employment at decent wages for young working-class people. Furthermore, by 1993 it became official policy to main-

tain unemployment at a high level.

Business Week, ran a special feature on "The Economics of Crime" in 1993, which emphasized the tough approach. But there's the admission:

New prisons are being built, but the number of police has barely kept pace with the growing population. Meanwhile, economic and social programs that could quickly bring down crime are largely ignored ... job prospects for young adults and teenagers have soured, lowering the economic rewards for staying straight ... it's crucial that the U.S. boost spending for job training and other programs in order to give teenagers and young adults better alternatives to crime.⁸

CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK MEN ■ Estimates have been published of very high percentages of young Black men in prison, under probation or parole. Andrew Hacker writes "After all, one in five Black men ultimately spends some time behind bars, almost seven times the rate for whites."⁹

This writer estimates, updating published data, are that as of 1994, of 1.5 million people in prisons or jails, some 700,000 were Black. Of 5.3 million Black men in the 15-35 year age range, 1,475,000, or 28 percent of the total, were imprisoned, under probation or parole.

The criminalization of young working-class men of all races has become very severe, but of Blacks it is terrible. *Business Week* estimates (1993) that 6.2 percent of white men aged 20-29 are in prison, on probation or parole, 10.4 percent of Latino men in that age range, but a shocking 23 percent of Black men aged 20-29.¹⁰

The Sentencing Project, an advocacy group based in Washington, estimates that in 1990, one out of four Black men in their twenties were under police jurisdiction. According to their estimate, with the rapid rise in imprisonment and sentencing, that proportion had risen to nearly one-third in the criminal justice system by 1995 – a result verified as essentially correct by Dr. Allen J. Beck, an expert of the Justice Department's statistics division. The sentencing project also found that while Blacks were 13 percent of monthly drug users, roughly comparable to their share in the population, they constituted 35 percent of those arrested for drug possession, 55 percent of the convictions, and 74 percent of the prison sentences.¹¹

This is one of the clearest exposés of the blatant racist discrimination involved at each stage of the

police, judicial and prison systems of the U.S.

Carrying the calculation a step further, these figures mean that a Black user is 19 times more likely to end up in prison, and, on the way to prison, he is four times more likely to be arrested, and eight times more likely to be convicted. Thus the discrimination intensifies at every stage of the judicial-legal system.

PROFITS AND LOSSES FROM CRIME ■ Government spending – federal, state and local for police, prisons, courts, etc. – has multiplied even more spectacularly than the number of its captives. In 1954, \$2.1 billion was spent, in 1970, \$8.6 billion, in 1990, \$74.2 billion!¹² Certainly it is much more by now (1995). President Clinton's budget for fiscal year 1995 included a 21 percent increase over 1994, and much "get tough on crime" rhetoric. The increase over 1990 was 48 percent. If state and local spending has increased in like proportion – a reasonable assumption – overall spending in 1995 will go well above \$100 billion.¹³ Under Congressional mandate, overall "discretionary spending" by the federal government is held unchanged at just under \$550 billion per year as far as 1999. But among the cabinet agencies, spending by the Justice Department, in which most anti-crime activity is centered, is called on to increase 86 percent.¹⁴

Along with the increase in dollar spending has come a rapid increase in the number of policemen and an even faster rise in the overall anti-crime bureaucracy, with unemployment at all levels of government reaching 1,722,000 by 1990.¹⁵

The increase in law enforcement spending is providing a profit bonanza to the capitalist class. A *Wall Street Journal* lead feature in 1994 was headed:

Triangle of Interests Creates Infrastructure to Fight Lawlessness – Cities See Jobs; Politicians Sense a Popular Issue – And Businesses Cash In.

Despite declining Pentagon orders, armament manufacturers were reaping rising profits through accelerated munitions exports and, especially, "conversion" to weapons of internal repression:

Westinghouse Electric, Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co., General Dynamics ... have created special divisions to retool their defense technology for America's streets.

Sandia National Laboratories, a major research and development center for nuclear weapons, is experimenting with blinding and deafening sprays.¹⁶

Goldman Sachs, Prudential Insurance, Merrill Lynch are "competing to underwrite prison construction with private, tax-exempt bonds - no voter approval required."

In addition to the profits from government contracts related to crime, private companies are making profits from soaring spending on anti-burglar devices for homes and cars, private guards, etc. As of 1993, such spending was to the tune of \$65 billion per year. It is stimulated by the intense media and governmental campaign arousing fear in the population.

New specialist corporations have been formed to carry out construction contracts, and contracts to operate privatized prisons. An example, is Corrections Corporation of America, whose stock is listed on the New York stock exchange. According to the *Wall Street Journal*: "Its founders and officers include major contributors to both major parties." Included among the officers are a former commissioner of corrections for Arkansas, Clinton's bailiwick, and a former director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The cynicism and greed of capitalists is highlighted by the following incident: "... Businessmen stood up and cheered in Massachusetts when ... Senator Edward Kennedy announced that Fort Devens, slated for closure, would be converted to a federal prison."¹⁷

COSTS TO WORKERS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS ▣

Working people bear the main burden of rising taxation, including that resulting from soaring crime control costs. Workers, blue collar and white collar, are the main victims of crime, and direct losers from its impact. The annual costs to crime victims from property loss, medical care and shattered lives is estimated to be \$220 billion.¹⁸

The losses of Black people especially, but also Latino people from crime are disproportionate by a wide margin. The victimization rate from crime, per 1,000 persons, in 1991, was 44 for Blacks, 30 for whites. Among males, the rate for Blacks was a record 61, for whites 38. Blacks were the victims of approximately one-half of all homicides, for a rate of being killed roughly seven times that suffered by whites.¹⁹

In addition, an estimated cost of \$50 billion is lost from urban decay, the cost of lost jobs and fleeing residents,²⁰ accelerated by crime. Blacks and Latinos, the main residents of central cities, have to

absorb the bulk of this \$50 billion loss.

As nearly half of all prisoners, Blacks suffer terribly from the obvious economic losses from imprisonment. In 1991, 69 percent of all prisoners were employed at the time of arrest.²¹ Presumably at least half of the Black prisoners were employed at time of arrest. Besides their loss of income, the much larger number of Blacks who have been in prison, who have arrest and conviction records, are greatly handicapped in seeking employment. More, the wave of racist propaganda criminalizing the entire African American people is used by racist employers to justify their discrimination in employment and pay against Blacks. While unmeasurable, such losses account for a significant share of the huge overall losses sustained by Blacks and Latinos from the adverse income differentials against them.

POLICE VIOLENCE ▣ The U.S. imposes upon African Americans many features of a police state: police forces riddled by racism and brutality; arbitrary arrest and imprisonment on a massive scale. As of the early 1990s, 3.1 percent of Black men were imprisoned, more than four times the rate of 0.7 percent that existed among South Africans before the formal ending of apartheid. When a business man or politician is arrested, a courteous procedure is followed. Often he is advised in advance, and agreement is made as to when he will appear with legal assistance. Bail is granted immediately, so that he does not spend time in jail prior to conviction.

The arrest of a Black man resembles an attack by thugs - thugs protected by their uniforms, guns, clubs, high-powered vehicles and equipment. The arrest is likely to include beatings, use of life-threatening choke holds at the whim of the policemen, without evidence of the victim's wrongdoing.

Terrible police beatings and killings are occasionally reported, but these are a small fraction of those that take place. The videotaped beating of Rodney King, with 20 cops participating or looking on approvingly, led to mass uprising in Los Angeles during which cops killed many more people. Police killings in Texas, New York, and other states have led to protest demonstrations.

In the South, during the 1880s and 1890s, over a hundred lynchings by gangs of the Ku Klux Klan and other vigilante groups were reported yearly. At

first, white workers and Blacks were murdered in equal numbers, but by the 20th Century, the scores of annual lynchings were almost exclusively against Blacks.²² Now the lynchings are carried out by policemen in jails. A federal inquiry revealed 46 hangings of prisoners by police in Mississippi jails over the period 1987-1992.²³ Protected by a racist judicial system, systematically lying in court without fear of punishment for perjury, policemen know that they can get away with unrestrained brutality without fear of imprisonment or of losing their jobs.

A glaring case of racism in the country's police forces was revealed by a police officer himself. Sgt. Don Jackson, a Black police officer on leave from the Hawthorne, California police department, drove into Long Beach, followed by an unmarked KNBC-TV van. He was on a personal sting operation to investigate police racism. He was stopped by white police officers from Long Beach, one of whom shoved his head through a window during the arrest. He wrote:

Some people wonder how I have the audacity to challenge the police. I have the audacity because I know who I am and I know what the police have represented to my people.

It is the police that tracked us as we fled the plantation. It is the police that took Rosa Parks off the bus in Montgomery, Ala. It was police chief 'Bull' Conner who set dogs and fire hoses on Black men, women and children protesting for their civil rights in Birmingham, Ala.

Operating free of constitutional limitations, the police have long been the greatest nemesis of Blacks irrespective of whether we are complying with the law or not. We have learned that there are cars we are not supposed to drive, streets we are not supposed to walk. We may still be stopped and asked 'Where are you going, boy?' whether we're in a Mercedes or a Volkswagen.²⁴

Two years after Jackson wrote the above words in a *New York Times* op ed, the police chief in nearby Los Angeles, Daryl F. Gates, refused to fire, no less arrange the prosecution, of the guilty cops in the notorious Rodney King case. The Mayor, Tom Bradley, an African American, called for Gates' resignation. He refused. Instead, the police union discussed a drive to recall Bradley. In this case, as in so many others, the armed power of the police made

mock of the formal trappings of capitalist democracy.

DISCRIMINATION AMONGST POLICE ▣ In the large cities of the United States, the police force plays much the same role as an invading army in an occupied city. The officers are mainly white, they almost all live outside of the ghetto area or the city itself, and they are often commanded by crudely racist chiefs. In every one of the 22 largest cities, the percentage of Blacks in the police force is less than the percentage of Blacks in the population, with a median of about one-half as much.²⁵ In Philadelphia, for example, only 19 percent of the police are African American with a population that is 38 percent Black. The same 19 percent are most likely assigned to actively patrolling the ghetto areas, which are nearly 100 percent Black.

Moreover, these figures applies to the rank-and-file cops. The higher ranking officers, who give orders, set policy, give ideological guidance to the rank and file, are much more exclusively white. In New York City, in 1994, where Blacks were 28.4 percent of the population, they constituted 11.6 percent of all members of the police force, and 12.5 percent of the plain-clothes cops and detectives. They were 7.3 percent of the sergeants, 5.9 percent of the lieutenants, and absolutely none of the 310 captains. Seven out of 163, or 4 percent, of those in the very top ranks – which are apt to be in staff jobs – are Black. Domination of the precincts, where police action takes place, is wholly white.

Two-thirds of the white cops live either in suburbs outside the city or in Staten Island, the borough which is formally a part of the city but entirely different in ethnic and economic composition. Twenty one percent of the Black cops are also outside residents. The fact is that white policemen and ranking officers, from outside of New York City and unsympathetic to the problems of city residents.²⁶

During the mayoral election campaign in New York City in 1993, thousands of white police demonstrated in front of City Hall, with much hoodlumism and rampant, overt racism. The police acted as major organizers for Rudolph Giuliani, the right-wing former prosecutor, and may have been decisive in Giuliani's narrow election victory over the incumbent Black mayor David Dinkins.

An inevitable conclusion follows from the

detailed evidence compiled by the Mollen Commission an official body established by the city of New York to investigate police corruption: corruption and brutality are not evils of individual "rogue cops." These are features of the entire police department, from top to bottom. While not every member of the police department steals or black-mails for bribes, and not every member brutalizes minority people, a large proportion of the cops on patrol do. And those who do not, cover up for them while the superior ranking officers condone their criminal activity. Moreover, the top ranks of the police department, in their training and disciplining of the police force, instill anti-labor and racist ideology directly or indirectly, emphasizing personal characteristics in accepting or rejecting applicants for officers' jobs. They evidently find favorable racist, anti-labor attitudes. The "old boys" network of top ranking officers creates a powerful apparatus of enforcement and repression on behalf of the social clubs of the top circles of capital.

Journalist Jim Genova gives these details of the Mollen Commission report:

The most shocking finding of the investigation was the level of organization of these police gangs. Police "crews"—groups of a dozen or more cops—would meet in secret locations within a given precinct (usually a drug-infested neighborhood with a predominantly Black or Latino population) and "identify" drug sites, plan raids, share proceeds according to a regular and agreed-upon principles ... drink, avoid patrol duties, meet girlfriends and use cocaine.

The crews used police equipment to "forcibly enter and loot drug trafficking locations. They use the police radio network, and code names, to mount and coordinate operation...

... a number of supervisors knew ... about corruption within their commands and did nothing to stop it...

The Commission was unable to obtain sufficient evidence concerning the corruption of the high command, because the department would not turn over some records and others were either "lost" or destroyed...

The report concluded that corruption and brutality went hand in hand. The crew would "terrorize minority neighborhoods." Officers would "routinely beat local residents as well as suspected criminals." The Mollen commission found these patterns of brutality, corruption and premeditated criminal activity ... part of a "20-year cycle of corruption."

The report showed a trend towards large-scale organized crime with rigid command structures and intense loyalty among its members, along the lines of street gangs.

The report concluded that many people in minority neighborhoods fear the police more than the criminals. "Who do you call when you need help," one woman asked, "You can't call the police."²⁷

The Commission recommended establishment of a body to oversee the police department independent of the city government. Mayor Giuliani not only blocked that but even opposed an oversight body whose members he would appoint, but outside of the police department. His position was that cleanup of the police should be left to the department, which is like deciding that control of criminal gangs should be left to the gangs themselves.

This issue arises in city after city – the struggle between forces supporting demands of victims of the police for an independent review and control authority, and the local government resisting any control outside of the police department itself.

In the immediate wake of the Mollen Commission report, only one New York City cop was arrested and sentenced to 14 years in prison – but that was despite refusal of the New York City authorities to prosecute. He was arrested and prosecuted by Nassau County police, where the particular officer, Michael Dowd, lived. It was evident from the attitudes of Mayor Giuliani and his police chief William Bratton that if they have their way there will be no criminal trials and punishments of the large number of police and supervisors guilty of these crimes; which means that the crimes will continue or be increased, this after the Knapp Commission report twenty years earlier.

AWARDS BY JURIES ■ Victims of police brutality and their families, unable to get the guilty cops punished in criminal court, are left only to sue for damages in civil court. Often these are settled with the stipulation that the terms and the very existence of a settlement be kept secret. For example, it is common knowledge among African American residents of Peekskill, New York, that such payments are made by the city of Peekskill on behalf of the Peekskill police, notorious for their racism and brutality.

Gannett News Service reporter Rochelle Sharpe

investigated 10 cases – out of a total of more than 500 considered – where juries ruled that the police must pay the victims – or their survivors – \$100,000 or more. With some verdicts running to more than a million dollars, the total paid by city government on just these 100 cases came to \$92 million. But of the 185 officers involved, only 8 were disciplined, 17 were promoted, and no action was taken in the case of the other 160 officers.

While African Americans are most frequently victimized by brutal cops, whites are also at risk from the police. In San Diego, a jury awarded a white former priest, Jim Butler, \$1.1 million after a sheriff's deputy "pushed Butler to the ground, kned him in the back, then slammed a car door on his legs – all because he wanted to help victims of a car crash."²⁸

By 1994, federal and many local governments were intensifying police-state measures. President Clinton sought ways to promote warrantless police sweeps of public housing projects, where Blacks were the major residents, after a federal judge halted an effort by the Chicago Housing Authority to conduct such searches without warrants. Clinton said that his attorney general and housing secretary had devised a "constitutionally effective way" to carry out such searches. He appealed for tenants to aid the cops.²⁹

GETTING ARRESTED SAFELY 101 ■ A *Wall Street Journal* headline, "Police Teach Getting Arrested Safely 101," was over an article by Brett Pulley describing a two hour course inflicted on 200 students in an overwhelmingly Black school in Suitland, Maryland by a group of officers from the County Police Department.

They told the students to speak when spoken to and not to strain against handcuffs ... during the forums students aren't giving any information regarding their Miranda rights, or how they should protect themselves if taken into custody ...

The officers are making the rounds of many of the predominantly Black public high schools in the country.

After dividing the students into groups, police officers explain why they often stop and question them. Because the students live in an inner-city area, they're more likely to fit the description of crime suspects ...

This man and another cop illustrate brutal methods they use against arrested people, and

attempt to justify them.

A few students are visibly angered by the demonstrations. One young female student snaps, "I don't like any police." Cpl. Anita Rosser responds "Okay, you said you said you don't like police. Wouldn't I be wrong to say I don't like all young Black men?"³⁰

She would be wrong, in that the very conduct of the police before the students reveals their profound racist insensitivity, and their feeling that they are justified in using special repressive measures against the Black population. How this practice of mass terrorization and intimidation of Black youth can be permitted is evidence of the degree to which systematic police brutality has become a normal part of exercise of state power in the United States. □

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Youth and the Elections

David Mirtz

The class struggle and basic class issues are coming to the fore as the main influence on young people and the youth and student movement. The role of a Communist youth organization and the building of a fighting, mass Young Communist League in the upcoming year must be seen in the context of the continuing economic crisis of U.S. capitalism and the struggle against the ultra right, led by Newt Gingrich and the 75 freshman Congress members, and the policies represented by the "Contract with America."

The total assault on the lives of people that the Contract represents is just beginning. The very lives of people, especially children and youth, are in jeopardy. The Contract will accelerate the exploitation of the working class and youth. The unemployment rate of people under 25 – officially already the highest at 11.3 percent – will skyrocket.

The Contract itself would have an impact in the following ways:

- Education aid would be slashed by \$4 billion, including \$1 billion for basic math and reading. Head Start cuts would deny 50,000 children a place in this preschool program. Loan and grant cuts would raise the cost of education for 5 million college students.

- Medicaid, which provides health care for the poor and disadvantaged would be cut by \$168 billion. Some 4.4 million poor children could lose coverage if the GOP shifts Medicaid to the states without requiring how the funds are spent and who is covered. A half-million young people would lose their summer jobs.

Millions of youth unemployed, millions of youth without any kind of health care, millions of youth without education, millions of youth living in the streets and in inhuman conditions, millions of youth living in poverty, that is the Contract on America for America's youth.

Young people do not support the Contract on America. Millions of young people across the country have been in protest – against the right-wing

assault on public education and attacks on immigrant rights; against the dismantling of affirmative action and the new forms of racism. From California to New York there is a growing militant rejection of these ultra-right attacks. And because these struggles focus on basic economic and class issues that effect on all youth – especially working-class youth – there is a growing unity of Black, Brown and white youth in protest.

The new level of multi-racial unity is important because it is based primarily on common interests and struggles. White youth are moved into protest with Black and Brown youth in defense of affirmative action or immigrant rights because they see these attacks as part of an overall attack on people's programs.

The class struggle is also influencing how young people see the labor movement. More and more young people see labor as a powerful force for change, where once they might have seen it as part of the "Establishment." Today there are closer relations between unions and youth and student organizations on a local, state and national level. Many young people, students and young workers, are training to become union organizers. Changes brought by the new AFL-CIO leadership offers an opportunity to forge even closer ties between labor and youth.

To win significant gains for young people, in education and employment and in the fight against racism, the ultra-right policies of Newt Gingrich and the Contract Republicans must be defeated in November. Mobilizing young people to help defeat the Contract on America at the polls will be a challenge. Like most people, youth don't vote unless there's something to vote for. In the 1992 elections, young voters turned out in record numbers. Based on candidate Clinton's promises of "Putting People First," the majority of these young voters voted against Bush and helped Clinton win the election. In the 1994 Congressional elections, after President Clinton's cave-ins to the right, the majority of young voters stayed at home.

The majority of young people no longer identify themselves as Republican or Democrats – they see

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themselves as politically independent. Young people will have to be convinced that the Contract on America must be defeated at all costs. They will need to be convinced that the broadest unity is necessary including with Democrats. The '96 elections will be a lesson in unity and coalition politics. Many youth will not want to vote. Many will not want to vote for a Democrat. They must be convinced that to sit out the election is to cast a vote for the Contract on America.

Candidates should be judged on their position on the Contract. Those who support it should be opposed. Those who oppose it should be supported. And those who are waffling should feel the heat from the people's movements. And we should not be fooled by any phony political independence. There is no political independence that is not independent of the Contract on America and does not help to defeat it in November. There will be some on the left that will disagree with that approach. We must put the question firmly to young people – what is progressive, what is militant, what is independent, what is revolutionary about anything that will help elect Dole, Gingrich and the Contract on America? The answer is clear – nothing.

Nor should the fight to defeat the Contract at the polls be limited to “getting out the youth vote” which some will want to take. It must be a campaign that involves militant protest and action. Grassroots protest against the Contract and pressure on the candidates running for office including Clinton. If we don't get youth on to the streets in protest, we won't get them into the polls to vote.

That the class struggle is becoming the main influence on the lives and thinking of young people is also reflected in the growth of YCL because the YCL is the only youth organization that puts class issues squarely at the center of its activity. The recruitment has shown that, given the chance, hundreds and thousands will join. Many identify politically with the YCL and look to the League for political guidance. In spite of this recruitment, we still have not met the challenge of building a mass YCL. Recruitment does not translate into mass organization, it only creates the possibility.

Building a mass YCL means a mass approach to organizing and organization, a mass approach to leadership and leadership development, a mass approach to public presence, a mass approach to social and cultural activities, and, of course, a mass approach to struggle. In each of these areas the question must be asked: is our approach geared

towards involving the few or the many?

There are many new young people around the Party and YCL. Many young people are joining the Communist Party. Many new CPUSA members have children of YCL age. This is a positive and welcomed development. We must have an approach to both. Are we looking for ways to involve the YCL-age children of Party members in the YCL? Are we encouraging young Party members to get involved in the YCL and help built it? If every Party district were to pick a very specific concentration area – a neighborhood where there is a Party club, a high school of college, or a work site where there is a concentration of young people, and build a league club, it would put the YCL on a whole new footing as well as the concerned Party district.

Building stable clubs remains a central challenge and a necessity for a mass YCL of struggle. We have some, but not enough. While we must experiment and have flexible forms, concentration in a particular neighborhood, block or housing project, high school, college or work site is a basic necessity for club stability. With YCL clubs, concentration takes on a special importance because young people's lives are always in flux.

The YCL's magazine *Dynamic* is a grossly under-utilized tool. Publication is infrequent, but when it is published and distributed, it always is a big hit. It is hard to conceive of a mass Communist youth organization without a mass publication. It not only allows us to speak to thousands of youth, influence them with our politics and give leadership, it educates League members in the science of Marxism-Leninism, trains leadership and is an important part of the League's national life. We must find ways to guarantee a more frequent publication.

The YCL can play a unique role in the struggle against the Contract on America, because many youth will say, “So we get rid of the Contract then what?” Many youth are concluding that the problems we face are rooted in the system of capitalism. Young people don't want to just say no to the Contract on America, they want to say yes to something. Many are saying yes to socialism, USA. But many are still searching. They don't like the way things are but they don't know an alternative. Only the YCL gives young people an alternative – socialism. We can build the League in the struggle against the ultra-right. Young people will come around because we are a center of struggle, but they will stay because we offer them a future. □

Affirmative Action Can Be Saved

Jason Rabinowitz

The last year has witnessed a vicious political, judicial and ideological assault on the affirmative action gains of the previous three decades.

As Joe Sims pointed out in "After the March: Where to Go From Here," (Dec. PA), the reactionary Supreme Court led the way, with a series of decisions that limited the scope of affirmative action programs allowed under the Constitution.

More recently, ultra-right forces have moved to curb or eliminate the programs already in place in several states, notably California.

In the ideological arena, affirmative action has been vilified in the media which hammer away at such racist themes as "reverse discrimination" and "preferences for unqualified minorities." The ideas behind the criminally racist book, *The Bell Curve*, are a fundamental ideological underpinning of the assault on affirmative action. The basic concept the anti-affirmative action forces are peddling to the people is that racially and nationally oppressed people are inferior, and therefore undeserving of affirmative action.

The goal of these right-wing wreckers is nothing less than the complete elimination of affirmative action programs in this country. The results would be devastating for the entire working class, but of course particularly so for African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and women.

As Sims discussed in his article, even with the affirmative action programs currently in place, the level of economic inequality African Americans face today is staggering, with a widening racist wage gap and levels of unemployment, poverty and homelessness several times those facing white people. Great inequalities exist for other racially and nationally oppressed groups and women as well.

If affirmative action in employment, education, housing, government contracts and elsewhere were to be eliminated, this grim situation would worsen severely.

Add to this the fact that the attack on affirma-

tive action is just one prong in an all-out assault on the working class, and in particular on minorities and women.

The same forces seeking to eliminate affirmative action also want to do away with anti-discrimination laws, welfare, Social Security, Medicare, legal services for the poor and all other social programs.

Viewed in this context, the attack on affirmative action is part of an overall assault on the rights of racially and nationally oppressed people that is truly genocidal, with dire implications for the entire working class. The ultra right has used California as a testing ground for its strategy to attack affirmative action programs on a state-by-state basis, and California Governor Wilson is at the forefront of this movement.

Wilson recently issued an executive order ending affirmative action in the distribution of state contracts. As a result, many minority- and women-owned businesses have already lost contracts that they had gotten for years, and many will be forced to go out of business.

Wilson also orchestrated the vote by the University of California regents to end all affirmative action in admissions and hiring. Wilson hoped to ride this racist wave into the White House, but instead his plans washed out. The people's reaction to Wilson's assault on affirmative action show the possibilities for defeating this racist trend everywhere. With his proposal to end affirmative action as the cornerstone of his presidential campaign, Wilson got absolutely nowhere and was forced to make an early exit from the race for the Republican nomination.

Meanwhile back home, he faces a rebellion against the regents' vote to end affirmative action. The very day of the vote, which was a close one that Wilson won only through heavy political arm-twisting, hundreds of students and community activists, including Jesse Jackson, came to protest the decision.

This showing was particularly significant because the meeting took place during the time school was out.

A few months later, on October 12, thousands of

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students at every UC campus participated in rallies, walkouts, teach-ins, and civil disobedience protests against the regents' decision. These militant protests demanded that the regents' decision be reversed before it is scheduled to be implemented in 1997, and that affirmative action be strengthened at the university.

The rejection of the regents' decision by university administrators and faculty was near-unanimous.

All the chancellors, who are the top administrators at each campus, condemned the vote. Professors and administrators participated in the student protests in many cases.

The trade union movement at the highest levels in the state actively opposed the decision. This struggle came to a bit of a head in January, when President Atkinson, the administrator in charge of the entire UC system, announced that he would not implement the regents' decision in 1997, but would postpone it until 1998, citing administrative difficulties in moving too fast.

While presented as merely an administrative decision, most saw it for what it was – a small but important protest against the regents' decision, made possible by the groundswell of protest.

Wilson and the regents reacted violently, threatening to remove Atkinson from his position. The chancellors threatened to resign *en masse* if the regents took this action. Unfortunately however, there was little organized support from students for Atkinson's action, partly because students saw it as a half-measure, and partly because there has been an overall lull in student action on the issue since the Fall. With insufficient support for his stand against the regents, Atkinson relented and agreed to implement the regents' decision as scheduled.

Despite this setback, the wave of protest against the regents' vote shows that the campaign against affirmative action is in trouble. Another indication of this is the troubles facing the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI). This proposed referendum is another element of the racist campaign in California. This ballot initiative would eliminate all affirmative action programs in all divisions of the state of California.

Despite a well-organized and well-funded campaign, the CCRI backers are having tremendous trouble collecting enough signatures to get the referendum on the ballot.

As this is being written, the deadline is but a

few days away and it is still unclear whether they will succeed.

Whether CCRI ultimately does get on the ballot or not, the fact that it was so difficult just to get it there shows the possibility of defeating the initiative, which would be a historic victory for the fight for affirmative action everywhere. Victories over CCRI-like bills in the Mississippi and Florida legislatures, as Sims discussed, similarly show that it is possible to roll back the anti-affirmative action tide. In the struggle to do this, the Communist Party and Young Communist League have a key role to play.

ROLE OF COMMUNISTS ■ Our role is to initiate militant struggle to save and expand affirmative action. But our unique role is also to provide ideological leadership and clarity on the question. This is particularly true because the racist anti-affirmative action forces have had some success spreading ideological confusion about affirmative action. One of their strategies is to try to win over people who are on some level consciously opposed to racism but perhaps lack a developed understanding of what racism is.

Therefore, the right wing uses the ideological fraud of "reverse discrimination" to turn reality on its head. In the Orwellian double-talk of these racist crusaders, it is not racism but the measures taken to combat it that are discriminatory. They have succeeded in stigmatizing the concepts of quotas and timetables.

These reactionary ideas have had some influence with large numbers of whites, and have become an obstacle to unity in the struggle against racism. Many liberal forces fail to take on these ideas squarely because they are not ideologically equipped to do it. They concede the question of quotas.

They are unable to explain why white people and men should support affirmative action, and they therefore adopt the losing strategy of attempting to win the struggle solely based upon the racially and nationally oppressed and women. But because of our class understanding of society and the role of racism, Communists can explain that the fight for affirmative action is a fight for all workers – Black, Brown and white – and for all students.

We understand that we can only advance as a class and people if we are united against our common corporate enemies, and that this unity is only possible based on a fight for full equality.

We explain that the fight against racism has

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Art, Labor, and the Class Factor

Norman Goldberg

The culture of a nation is a confluence of all the social characteristics that form it – its class development, economic level, education, language, political character, philosophy and art.

In a highly advanced, class-divided country like the U.S., nobody, not even the most consistent fighter against oppression and injustice, is fully free from the influences of class-divided life. This is particularly true in the spheres of the mind. Thought, ideology and aesthetics show a cultural schism in all of us. We, who struggle to free society from capitalist barbarism in all aspects of life are nevertheless, by living under that barbarism, colored by it in many visible and invisible ways. In a stirring poem by Bertolt Brecht, an older Communist speaks to a younger one about the years of class conflict in Germany, and in a dramatic line says this: "Alas, we who wished to lay the foundations of kindness could not ourselves be kind." It is like staying in the rain. No matter what protection we may take, we are all bound to get wet. Social movement and political action are not seamless, but are affected by the dialectical nature of class struggle.

Despite every factor, class life is the ultimate determinant that makes us what we are, and fundamental to this is working-class life. In work, activity, thought, feeling and struggle – in everything that affects the working class, a socially inherent culture is formed which is hostile to capitalism and its intellectual and cultural servants who infest the ideological marketplace. Because of the intrusion of massive bourgeois influences on the collective mind of the working class, the class is held in rein, oblivious to its collective mission – to true democracy and socialism.

Of course, there is nothing original in this. It has been stated ten thousand times before, and needs to be said again and again to keep us on our toes.

Greater support for working-class culture must be put on the agenda of the Communist Party in this new period. It has to be studied and mastered by cultural activists as well as Communists in general.

It is an alternate culture, a "second culture" that was long ago identified by Lenin, one that was destined to become the first culture when the working class finally came into its own.

CULTURE ROOTED IN LABOR ■ By its very name, working-class culture is immanently rooted in labor and all that flows from it. Work is the underlying engine that feeds social life. Under capitalism, the true quality of labor is distorted, and it becomes something to be despised, a necessary evil to be endured for economic survival by the worker. The true quality of labor is confiscated by the capitalist and turned into a product for profit, and the endpoint of work is reduced to its money equivalent only. It is under socialism that labor is recognized as the real source of social wealth and the wellspring for cultural expression and art. As an example of work as a source for art, here is a poem by the Lithuanian poet Eduardas Miezelaitis who sings the praises of "hands that have known the enormity of labor." Miezelaitis was a product of formerly socialist Lithuania, and for him, hands are the symbol of free labor that embody the beauty of the working man and woman:

*Have you seen a tree?
Just as a tree lifts its heavy boughs,
I lift my fists.
Here are two hands –
The free hands of a worker.
In the name of these hands
I accept your challenge!
Above all they prize
their freedom to plough and tend wheat,
to sow and reap
and hold a slice of brown bread,
grown freely
by a free people.*

Socialism makes it possible to grasp the nobility of labor and its inspiration for art and literature, but socialism is not on our immediate agenda.

In this period, the theme of labor hardly ever appears in any form in the arts, except as backdrop

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for banal tales spiced with erotica, exotica and neurotica. In this age of mega-monopoly the worker is censored out of film, television, literature, theatre and other mass art and entertainment media, and where presented is distorted and trivialized.

HOW BOURGEOIS CULTURE TREATS LABOR ■ A few years ago Hollywood spewed out something called *Working Girl*, a film starring Melanie Griffith. This "working-class" opus treated us to the world of high-powered promotional guru firms and the financial moguls they served. Not much hope for a working-class story here, even though it dealt with an ordinary working woman from Staten Island trying to make her way in the posh offices of New York's financial district. There was material for a good movie here as we watched her climb the commercial ladder to success, something vaguely reminiscent of an old English film of the 1950s, called *Room at the Top*. In that film, the message strikes home with telling force as it shows that the road to commercial success is paid for with human tragedy. Success is tantamount to failure in the quest of a purposeful life. What a far cry this is from *Working Girl*, where Melanie rises to the top, is given her own private office, and informs her secretary that she is no longer to be served coffee, something she had to do in her previous days as a secretary. Melanie will now get her own coffee. Progressive cinema indeed!

Hollywood and television, copy catting what makes money, have ground out a string of *Working Girl* sausage look-alikes, slick, classless and predictable. Films like *Wall Street*, popular a few years ago, are subtly disarming. While there is a working-class side to *Wall Street*, the principal focus is on the fascinating doings and lifestyle of a financial wheel-dealer, his destructiveness and parasitism, and preoccupation with his manipulative power. Awe and envy of this monster is substituted for anger and social condemnation. We see this theme repeated in the play and film *Other People's Money*, and in an endless parade of Horatio Alger novels and dramas by writers like Judith Krantz, Sidney Sheldon and Barbara Taylor Bradford. Of course there have been some exceptions. Earlier films like *Norma Rae*, *Country*, *The River* and *Matewan* were good examples of working-class life and struggle in cinematic form.

More recently, the French film *Germinal*, Emile Zola's novel about coal miners, demonstrated the

overwhelming power of the class factor in a work of art. Here is a fierce portrayal of life in the mines, and the bloody strike of the workers for living wages and better working conditions in 19th century France. *Germinal* is class-based drama to the core, dealing with the key facets of social life and conflict in partisan form. Here are workers who are fully dimensioned and not mere stick figures. The work process is no random thing, but is depicted in detail with stark realism. Home and family life is portrayed with human and tragic overtones in a way that adds a special insight to the narrative, and the uneven levels of class and political awareness among the miners intensifies the contradictions that turn social reality into gripping art.

To repeat, the key feature in all the arts of our time has been the calculated exclusion of workers as a subject for study and creative expression. Despite occasional exceptions to this, film, television, literature and theatre have avoided, bypassed and censored this theme for decades. Even as the important topics of racism and sexism have made advances through the media barriers as drama and entertainment, the working class remains banned.

THE MYTH OF THE CAREER ■ Why? Critics and their cohorts will tell you that this has long ceased to be a popular or meaningful theme for the arts. After all, they assert, we are a consumer and service society with a working population that does not have jobs but "careers," and they go to the office decked out in business attire carrying attache cases, not tool boxes. They will then say that white collar workers more than triples blue collar workers, and that the "career" has replaced the job. When pushed, they will deliver the *coup de grace*, blurting out that the factory and the assembly line is where unions and reds are to be found, thus exposing their anti-labor and anti-Communist bias.

Bourgeois critics fabricate a society which they claim is free of antiquated class divisions, a society where social significance arises from pressing computer tabs and pushing paper. This, some of them describe as "labor in the abstract," furthering their belief in the significance of art in the abstract.

Then who supplies them with food? Who makes their clothes, their furniture, the accessories they use? Who built their homes and the computers they play with? Who makes their automobiles, planes, trains, buses? Who makes it possible for them to live? Only the "careerists?"

They do not understand that the vast majority of non-industrial workers are indispensable to and extensions of the material production process. Without these workers, production is paralyzed. Marx pointed out that the value of a commodity is determined by the total amount of labor time necessary to its realization. While he was not here dealing with surplus value, which is tied to the actual production process only, he made clear that surplus value could not be realized by the capitalist until the total labor time configuration made the final exchange of goods for money possible.

The whole working class on a world scale is today larger than ever. While the production process becomes ever more specialized, the service component becomes increasingly complex. In fundamental terms, it is an integrated process combining a wide variety of production and nonproduction labor, a mass class whose primary sector is basic industry. Are people with "careers" not workers too? Are they not subject to work pressures, exploitation and discrimination? These workers largely lack union protection and they are regularly fired, or to use the vernacular, made "redundant" without recourse to defend themselves. There certainly is a subject here for a film and not another *Working Girl* with concentration on the boardroom and the bedroom, but not the workroom.

Of course, these are rhetorical questions and criticisms. We cannot expect anything but more and more anti-working-class and anti-human products from the profit makers in the arts. But we must fight against this with all means possible. At bottom it is an ideological war, and we must keep our cultural and aesthetic heads above water, so to speak.

MONOPOLIZATION OF ART ■ Cultural perversion is a replica of capitalist perversion. At bottom, ours is an economic dictatorship with the trappings of a political democracy, although the political masquerade allows openings for class battles against economic and social injustice.

The film and television industries are controlled by media magnates like Disney, Time-Warner, Murdoch and Turner. Theatre companies are shackled by banks and real estate companies. Smaller publishing houses have been swallowed up by larger ones, who themselves have been acquired by banks, food companies, oil conglomerates and such. Most independent newspapers have either gone belly-up or have been taken over by predators. Sports have

become a super-profit industry tied into advertising and media needs, and individual athletes have been turned into cogs to service the money wheel.

The sound of music may be likened to sound for profit. This industry has been absorbed by financial sharks, compelling opera houses, symphony orchestras, ballet and dance companies, jazz and rock groups, country singers and others to gimmick up their productions for "mass appeal," often with advertising messages neatly inserted into the music, lyrics and program literature. The three tenor extravaganza, now in vogue, is a multi-billion dollar mega-promotion business involving tapes, magazines, food and drink tie-ins, Pavarotti, Careras and Domingo T-shirts, hats, trinkets, fan clubs and more. The art of the song has been diverted to the demands of cultural kitsch. Jazz and rock artists are constantly compelled to conform to the "shell and sell game" of the audio and video tape bigwigs, and it is something of a miracle that fine creative and performing talent occasionally breaks through this commercial fog. On a recent interview, a Black rock composer and performer called the current state of his field, "a new version of spiritual slavery."

Painting and the visual arts have been relegated to the domain of "high art," something that transcends mass public tastes, preserving the truly fine and pure. This was long trumpeted by art critics Hilton Kramer, Clement Greenberg and others. As Greenberg stated in an article written years ago:

... the American artist has to embrace and content himself, almost with isolation, if he is to give the most honesty, seriousness and ambition to his work. Isolation is, so to speak, the natural condition of high art in America. Yet it is precisely our more intimate and habitual acquaintance with isolation that gives our advantage at this moment. Isolation, or rather the alienation that gives our advantage at this moment. Isolation, or rather the alienation that is its cause is the truth. Isolation, alienation, naked and revealed unto itself, is the condition under which the true reality is indispensable to any ambitious art.

This was a manifesto by the high priest of aesthetics directed to a generation of young artists who were instructed that truth and beauty were best found in the tortuous maze of expression through abstraction. It was a manifesto concocted in the 1950s, the years of the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist Cold War. Greenberg was well suited to the

task. A follower of Trotskyism, he well served the U.S. State Department's needs by turning away thousands of artists, writers, composers and others from the path of wholesome artistic growth.

It is ironic that the exponents of rarified art have themselves been finally snowed under by an avalanche of global cultural commercialism. Yes, say today's art pitchmen, painting is still a high art, remote and unsullied by crass masses. But they subtly qualify this position. To successfully complete its mission art must not be too distant. The audience for high art is increasing fast, and painting must not be too distant. The audience for high art is increasing fast, and painting must descend from its pedestal and satisfy the new tastes halfway. What these pitchmen have in mind is to attract thousands of nouveau rich potential buyers to the vanities of owning provocative works that will put them in the company of the favored few - who by now are hardly few. New buyers are given crash courses on the new art by renowned authorities, who attempt to disentangle the visual and verbal confusion in simple terms. However, as most folks know, this art remains a tower of Babel, whether explained in words of one syllable or many.

POST-SOCIALIST MODERNISM ■ The fall of the Soviet Union and European socialism has given a big boost to the art hustling business, and a big market has been created for Soviet and East European abstract dissident art. Many hundreds of Western dealers have scoured Russia in a ravenous search for all forms of abstraction, surrealism, conceptualism, minimalism and anything else that they can fabricate into a marketable product for the West. This art has become high in demand. By strictly technical standards, much of this work is mediocre as it is aesthetically vapid, but that matters little. If the artist is from a former socialist land where he or she was rejected, it will be merchandised into significant art - and it will sell big.

The plain facts are that these artists refused to lend their skills to the massive and unprecedented movement to enhance socialist society with art that the people could relate to and enjoy. Instead they chose to work in isolation, away from the "common" crowd, as they enjoyed the benefits of full employment, free education and health care which the "common" crowd made possible for them. These artists were essentially selfish and opportunistic. They turned away from the effort to culturally

enrich the growing needs of socialist society, but instead now work to enrich their own pockets by turning out a parade of obscure and monotonous concoctions for their bourgeois customers.

There are well over 100 art galleries in the United States that specialize in "post-socialist modernism." The fact that more than 95 percent of the people living under socialism had no use for this art, is used by dealers to justify the old adage that the true artist is ahead of his time. They conjure up the examples of Van Gogh and Cezanne to prove their case. Thus the twisted logic is advanced that if art is unrecognized or unappreciated, it must be good - in this instance, good for business, to be sure.

The non-working-class and non-humanist face of "post-socialist modernism," together with its counterparts in the West, have adulterated mass art in every cultural genre. We are regularly beset by a spate of new-found talent with the accent on uniqueness, originality and individuality. With all of them skimming the surface of life in their work, and having nothing of worth to say, even the art-sensitive public has grown jaded by the monotonously similar fare of "unique originality."

LACK OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ■ A glaring feature of our age is the backwardness of our government in recognizing the importance of culture and art as a necessity, a human right essential for social enhancement, and a federal responsibility. Only full government support can make the arts available to all the people. It will free creative and performing artists from the stranglehold of corporate control and the miseries of unemployment and general insecurity.

Art is a special component of education, and it helps create a more fully dimensioned human being. This has long been known by many countries around the world. Like its primitive backwardness in dealing with health care, the United States spends less on the arts than any major country in the world. Even putting aside the former and present socialist countries where the arts were and are fully funded by the governments, the major capitalist nations do far more than the United States. France spends more than 20 times as much money on the arts and Canada is ahead by about 500 percent. It is similar with Germany, Italy, England, Japan, Austria, the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere.

It is a sign of how far the United States has degenerated in this sphere when we recall that for

some seven years during the 1930s and 1940s, the Federal Arts Program of the WPA brought music, theatre, film, dance, poetry and painting to millions of working people throughout the country. It was the most important progressive cultural movement in American history. It is sad that most of the current generation, including cultural activists, know little of this history. Thousands of painters, writers, actors, composers, musicians and directors got their start under WPA sponsorship. The WPA brought us the likes of Orson Welles, Marc Blitzstein, John Houseman, Canada Lee, Richard Wright and Dean Dixon. Tributes to WPA have been made by Hazel Scott, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Count Basie, Jacob Lawrence, Arturo Toscanini and Marian Anderson. This is a history and a tradition that must be restored and become a guide for cultural direction and political action by labor and all progressives.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS ■ In this respect, something must be said about the pitiful state of affairs existing around the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This agency was set up by the government years ago to fund the arts, and it operates on a puny annual budget of about \$150 million dollars to finance various cultural ventures; hardly tip money. Despite NEA's relative in consequence, it is targeted for destruction by further budget cuts in Congress where Babbit-minded Republican "contractors" think that art is a snobbish indulgence.

A complication has arisen in the fight for proper art funding when the NEA, influenced by bourgeois art, has backed ventures whose purpose has been to foster narrow avant-garde fads in the graphic arts, theatre and music. Not long ago, a furor broke out in Congress and in right-wing quarters over NEA's backing of a photography exhibit of homoerotic compositions by Robert Mapplethorpe. Other NEA funding was given to theatrical presentations of a similar mode. The battle lines were drawn. Jesse Helms and his ilk denounced this art as inimical to what God-fearing Americans stood for, then firing his big gun by demanding an end to government support of art.

This was enough to alarm many in the art world who feared Helms and his obscurantism. Leading museum officials, critics and activists in the arts led in the fight to support NEA's right to choose what to fund, but many who were against the right wing,

found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to defend the photography of Mapplethorpe and the controversial stage performances being funded, which they disapproved of, sometimes intensely.

This remains an explosive issue that threatened to divide those forces who advocate freedom in the arts. The basic weakness here is that the question lacks a working-class approach. The focus in the arts has been in areas dear to bourgeois and petit-bourgeois cultural elements. They have commanded the aesthetic terrain for many years, and their concerns are socially irresponsible. Only a Marxist-Leninist approach is capable of sorting out the intellectual confusion so rampant here. Labor and progressive cultural workers must enter this fight and lead it away from elitist middle-class control. Only in this way can the advocacy of government support of the arts be turned into a genuine working-class and people's movement.

There are many efforts and activities taking place in the arts that are devoted to social and political questions. A number of independent theatre and music ensembles perform, often connected to trade unions, school and community organizations who support them as best they could. There are literary and poetry groups, graphic art workshops and cultural magazines – all in the effort to counter the degeneration slide of commercialized culturalism.

NEW CULTURAL INITIATIVES ■ An important development along these lines is the publication of a new cultural magazine called *The Hammer* which is published four times a year. *The Hammer* is different. It aims to take a working-class stand in culture and art, and it is open to the views of the Communist Party as well as other friendly forces on the left.

The Labor Heritage Foundation is an organization of consequence in the field of progressive culture, especially since it is affiliated with the AFL-CIO. It welcomes creative and performing art activists who work with trade unions and similar associations, and its aim is to further the cause of labor culture with music, dance, pictures and song. Hundreds of activists are associated with the Labor Heritage Foundation, and its annual weekend conferences in Silver Springs, Maryland are attended by many writers, singers, poets, painters and cartoonists who perform and exchange experiences. Labor Heritage has grown, and now has an affiliate in the Pacific Northwest.

LABOR AND ART ■ Labor creates the basis for democratic social life because of its collective character. This collective character makes possible the emancipation of the human spirit, and strengthens it against capitalist compression and distortion. The artist, in full alliance with labor, learns that there is no fundamental contradiction between social responsibility and responsibility to his/her art, or as Sidney Finkelstein put it, there is no contradiction between "outer" and "inner" truth in the collective life.

In considering the essence of labor in its philosophical sense, Karl Marx wrote about the aesthetic content of the labor process, by which he meant the human activity directed at the fashioning of matter for the satisfaction of social and personal needs. Early aesthetic pleasure arose from the labor process in the form of work sounds translated to song and dance which imitated the physical act of labor. The "form-conscious eye," derived from the labor experience, reproduced this experience in drawing, painting and symbolic design long before art emerged as a specific discipline. "Original" feeling, was derivative of work.

Of course, under capitalism, conditions of production are such as to preclude any aesthetic pleasure in work, since the producer (worker) becomes a mechanical appendage of the ever-more complex production system and is enslaved by the machine. Both labor and its product are alienated. Instead of becoming culturally and spiritually richer, aesthetic feeling is eviscerated, and as Marx put it, the worker pays for this with all five senses. Socialism creates the favorable conditions for the free development of labor. Men and women are given the opportunity to refine and perfect their propensities and talents towards the common good. Labor becomes socially meaningful, "the self-realization of the individual."

Work in material production and art are of the same nature, both being an organic blend of the physical, the intellectual and the sensuous. Labor and art both require directed concentration of purpose and will power from which successful accomplishment gives birth to aesthetic feeling. What gives labor and art their aesthetic distinctiveness is production embodying social function and charm.

The goal of creative labor and art is to produce a new object that satisfies rising needs and furthers the aesthetic dimension. In art, it may be seen as the creation of a "higher nature" which is the preexisting objective world transformed to a new level. Cre-

ative labor, more affixed to the material demands of society, does not develop in tandem with creative art, but in a more tangible way also recreates the objective world in a new and advanced way.

As indicated before, socially useful labor and true creative art is fully possible only under socialism. It is then that working-class character is elevated by new socially harmonious conditions, becoming a more humanized subject for art. This may appear outwardly deceiving as in the recollections of the Soviet sculptor Nikolai Tomsy. He had been commissioned to do a sculptural portrait of a highly regarded industrial worker, a smith. Tomsy was disappointed in meeting his subject who looked thin and unprepossessing, not an ideal model for portraying a labor hero. But later, when Tomsy visited the factory to watch the smith at work, he was thrilled by the sight of this worker at the steam hammer, his strong rhythmical movements and his enthusiasm radiating with a labor beauty. The sculptor then approached his assignment with new cognition. It may be said that as conditions shape the worker they inspire the artist.

Education in the arts, while technically excellent, has in social terms been inexcusably inadequate. Students from many art institutions are poorly taught the true social history of their particular disciplines, with a layer of racism sometimes hovering over their training. As one example, very little of significance is taught about the early 20th century African American composer William Grant Still, who wrote the "Afro-American Symphony" and the opera "The Troubled Island," both of which are hardly ever performed. As usually taught, Still was considered to be a mediocre composer, too imitative of Dvorak and Mussorgsky, and his music was thought to be lacking in texture and spiritual depth. These opinions echoed the writings of many white music critics from the 1920s to the 1940s, and this was what music students came away with. However, composers Roy Harris and Virgil Thomson found in William Grant Still a creator of profound sensitivity who did not imitate Dvorak and Mussorgsky but built upon them. Sergei Prokofiev considered Still particularly great.

In painting, a cloud of ignorance hangs over the names and works of many first-rate Black artists, and again, the schools are largely to blame. While the unrelenting intensity of the civil rights movement made artists like Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Catlett, Horace Pippin and

Charles White visible, how much is known about John Biggers, Norma Morgan, Eldzier Cortor, Faith Ringgold and Roy de Carava, all superior artists? They and so many more are not just names. Their art was uplifting because its mastery of color, tonality and composition brought to life paintings of pathos and beauty. So much has been buried. So much must be rediscovered.

Labor has arrived at a turning point. Recently, a new slate of officers headed by John Sweeney was elected to lead the AFL-CIO, the first election of its kind in the union's history. It reflected the fighting mood of America's workers. The cultural front must be made a major focus for trade unions in this new period. Cultural work must be initiated across the board. Labor's voice needs to be raised, using all the

instruments of modern high technology. Labor must be heard on the Internet, and it must have its own television and radio network. Wherever labor appears it must speak with spirit. It needs a cultural cadre and a militant cultural army to give artistic eloquence to what it represents.

Labor and art are kindred spirits that have been separated for too long. They are alike because they make the material and spiritual things so necessary to life.

Working-class struggle in economics and politics can be set back. It can be distorted but it can never be destroyed. Neither can its culture. Together with the working class, this culture may lose many battles, but it will inevitably win the war. □

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always been key to the expansion of rights for all.

We explain that the same forces in society that oppose affirmative action also are the ones behind the assault on wages and trade union rights, on health care, on Social Security and other social programs that benefit all workers.

We explain that the solution to the economic crisis is not for workers to fight each other for the inadequate number of existing jobs, educational opportunities, and so on, but to unite to fight for more jobs, school, hospitals, and other social benefits. Communists also provide clarity in the struggle for affirmative action because of our understanding of the systemic, institutional nature of racism.

The concept of "reverse discrimination" only makes sense if one sees racism as simply a problem of prejudices that some individuals have in their minds. But racism is much more than this. It is a whole structure of oppression and inequality that permeates every aspect of our society. It is part and parcel of the capitalist system.

Through the system of racism, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian Americans face systematic inequality in every area of life - economic, political and social. This is why the problem requires systematic solutions such as affirmative action. In the face of this systematic oppression, the idea of "reverse racism" is an absurdity. Communists are in a unique position to

provide this kind of ideological understanding. Finally, Communists explain why we need not just the maintaining of existing affirmative action programs, but their dramatic expansion. Because the fact is that the affirmative action programs currently in place, while valuable, are wholly inadequate to address the problem. The implementation of affirmative action programs in workplaces, schools and elsewhere is extremely uneven, because it is largely voluntary, left to the goodwill of state and local government and private business.

Further, the scope of such voluntary programs has been severely limited by the Supreme Court in the Bakke and more recent cases. This explains why the existence of affirmative action programs for the past few decades has not had a greater impact in promoting equality, a fact that argues for the expansion of affirmative action, not its elimination.

Therefore, Communists must fight to turn the struggle to save affirmative action into a struggle to extend it into all areas of life, to make it comprehensive, mandatory, and loophole-free. Communists must provide this kind of ideological leadership, because if we do not do it, no one else will. And the historic opportunity to defend and extend affirmative action in our country will be lost. □

A Note on a Hundred Years

Lewis Gordon

The Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana once declared that those who do not learn the lessons of history are destined to repeat historical mistakes. Santayana was rather charitable in his presumption that some people may want to move forward on matters of grave historical importance. But those whose main concern is to thwart the course of history, to steal away its progressive possibilities and offer regressive alternatives, repeating history is exactly what they have in mind.

There are many ways to read the present in terms of the past. On birthdays, we try to recount not only what we have become. But we also try to reminisce and bring to life the significance of where we have been. Well, in contemporary U.S. politics, conservatism has decided to celebrate 1996 by reinvigorating 1896. For readers who may not be familiar with the significance of that date, 1896 was a year of irony. In 1896 there was the culmination of every effort to turn back the clock on what both the 13th Amendment (which outlawed slavery in the U.S.) and the 14th Amendment (which guaranteed equal protection to members of this society) represented.

There were cases in the 1870s through early 1880s in which "preferential treatment" of Black and Native Americans was outlawed. Legislation was implemented, under the banner of "civil rights," the effect of which was to curtail any effort to further the course of African American equality. And finally, there was the crowning achievement: *Plessy v. Ferguson*. That 1896 ruling effectively sealed the course of regression with a principle of "separate but equal" administration of the law of the land. Segregation was affirmed and a mock equality, where procedure rules over substance, became the mark of U.S. civilization well into the present century.

For many progressives, the 1960s represented the second U.S. Civil War. It is remembered today as the Civil Rights struggle, but we should not delude ourselves. It was a war. It continues to be one. It was a war with revolutionary aims, as is easily seen by

William Patterson and Paul Robeson's bold effort to make the United States come to terms with its genocidal activities. The Civil Rights struggle stands in relation to the present pretty much as the Civil War stood in relation to the 1890s. What tale do our '90s tell?

First, we find, the scores of cases and legislation against the efforts of the 1960s and the 1970s. The attack on affirmative action has run the course from court rulings on absurd notions like "reverse discrimination" and "meritocracy" to contemporary legislation against progressive programs for Blacks and other people of color.

It is a mark of this course of action that it has taken organizing techniques from the left but for the purposes of a conservative, right-wing agenda. Thus, just as the concept of discrimination has been perverted to meet the needs of the haves instead of the have-nots, so, too, has the very meaning of the terms "civil rights" and "revolution." We find – as in the California, Oregon and Illinois so-called "civil rights" initiatives – the use of the *notion* of civil rights against any material example of civil rights. In Marxist revolutionary theory, this technique is what may be called a form of reactionary idealism.

Reactionary idealism emerges when we separate concepts from their material instantiation. When the notion of civil rights is separated from the people who most embody questions of exclusion, then one can float freely over constituencies who lay claim to representation. One can level out political and economic realities and conceal how both power and representatives of power go about acquiring capital and alienating the general citizenry's access to concrete political participation. Rights therefore become a matter of protecting the prevalence of the most advantaged and disenfranchising the least advantaged.

We find a similar turn being taken on the concept of revolution. When revolution is divorced from its historical meaning of radical systemic and systematic change and then reduced to one group of rulers replacing another, we find ourselves facing the obscenity of a right-wing government that refers to itself as "revolutionary." In the 1890s, reactionary

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groups were able to implement a well-orchestrated "contract" on most of America: the separation of the poor and the downtrodden into divided, easily accessible fodder for a capitalist machine that was ready to shift gears into an industrial-military complex to make manifest the "destiny" of a profiting elite. In 1996, that cause has found its *Plessey v. Ferguson*: it's called the Republican Contract on America.

The return of Plessey is accompanied by a strangely familiar set of players. In *Plessey's* day, there was Booker T. Washington's ideological preparation of a Black conservative faction with the lumpen-bourgeoisie dynamics that they encapsulated. As a lumpen-bourgeois, that group's primary "capital" was political. They served as a liaison between communities of color and the Wall Street District of Columbia center. It made sense that the issues that emerged were such that the focus of theoretical and practical debate became notions of so-called Black pathology (laziness, licentiousness, greed, etc.) and Black "exoticism" (flourishing culture in the midst of social misery).

We find in 1996 a similar preparation afoot. When an unprecedented number of Black men (and an untold number of women) recently gathered together and stated their case in Washington, D.C., it was no surprise that the current heirs of *Plessey* responded with sound agreement.¹ "But isn't this what we've been saying all along?" Translated: "Perhaps the current conservative regime is more in touch with Black values than their liberal and progressive counterparts."

What happens to any notion of class struggle when the interests of management and workers are blurred? What happens to the struggle against racism when Blacks begin to organize in such a way that the Klan could declare, "But isn't this what we've been saying all along?" Red flashes should beckon a cry of "Beware!"

Look at the record: The Reagan administration unable to grapple with the problem of unemployment, responded through a number of ideological resources like the infamous *A Nation at Risk*² by declaring the American worker incompetent and ill-equipped. In education, as resources were generated away from school systems that functioned as community centers as sites of progressive political education and then rechanneled into research facilities that study school systems, many of the fictional problems of 1983 became material realities by the

end of the 1980s.³

The assault on social welfare programs took a similar course. As resources were rechanneled away from programs that were working, their devastated remains were presented as the standards that existed all along. What right-wing forces learned very well in the 1980s was that, with the proper capital, they can make a social pathology exist simply by virtue of declaring it (which enables a redistribution of resources) and then confirming it after having made it become so. With such a pattern, we need to be asking questions about what has been declared in 1995 and now being put fully into place in '96.

In 1995, we saw a resurgence in eugenics research that declares Black people to be constitutionally stupid, criminal and nymphomaniac. We then saw a march on Washington D.C. which provided the moralistic dimension of this turn. Is it not clear that, in these declarations, there is a hope for a transformed Black population that can meet the current retrograde agenda? A Black population, in other words, that is too stupid and morally deviant to fight instead of atone?

While the anniversary candles are being lit in celebration of *Plessey's* coming full circle, it may be instructive for most us, upon whom the current contract is issued, to consider a prescient voice of a century ago as we face the battles that will mark our entry into the next millennium:

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reform. The history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims, have been born of earnest struggle.

This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did, and it never will.

Echoing Frederick Douglass, we must now join hands in struggle against an elite anniversary celebration that promises to be no less than our common nightmare. □

Reference Notes

1. For discussion, see volume 25, issue number 4, *The Black Scholar* (Fall 1995).
2. *A Nation at Risk*, Washington, D. C. National Commission on Excellence in Education.
3. See Ira Shor's introduction to *Freire for the Class Room: A Source Book for Liberatory Teaching*, ed. by Ira Shor, afterword by Paulo Freire Portsmouth NH, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1987.

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