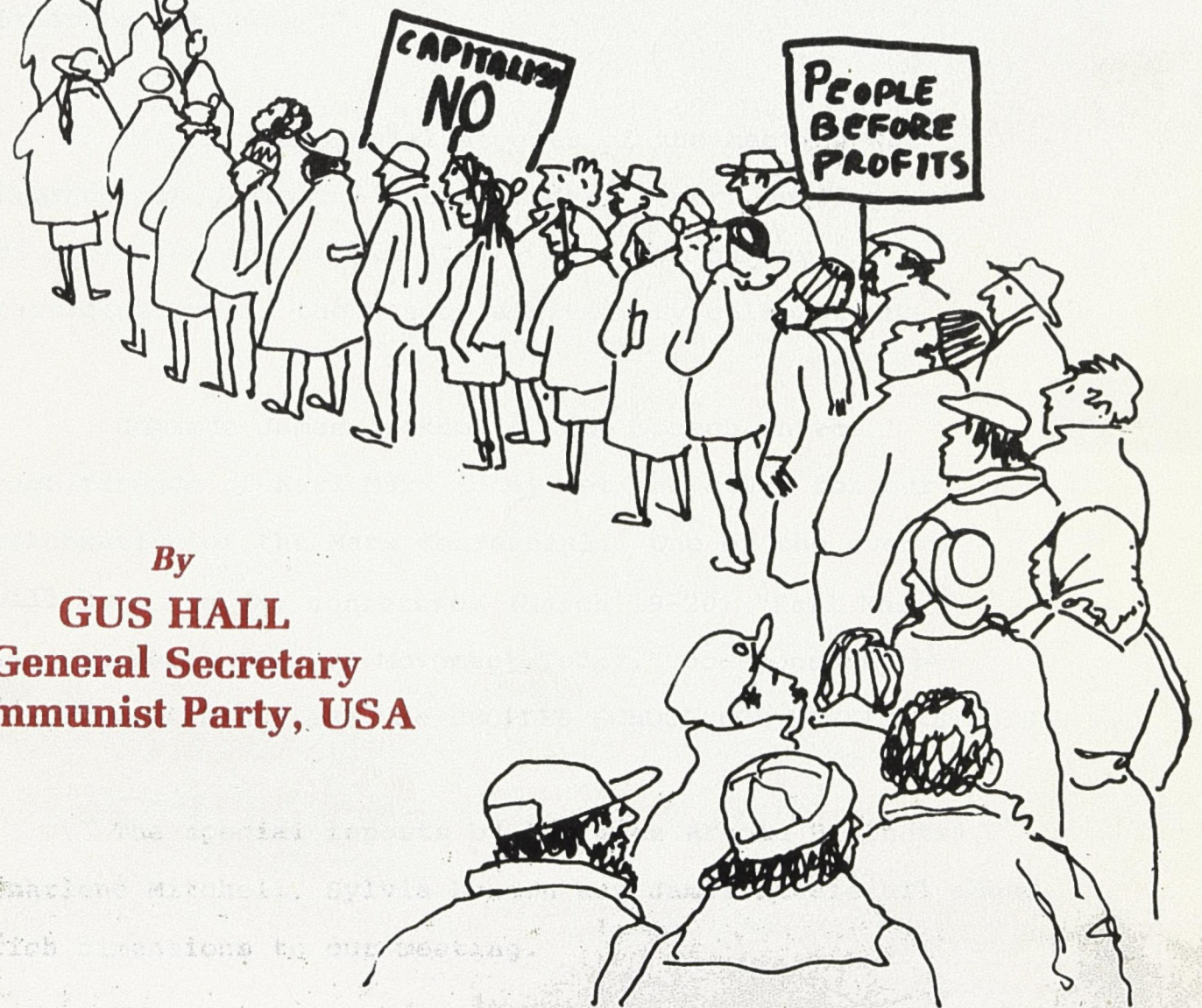


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Summary Remarks on Discussion of Main Report “*State of the Union = State of Emergency*”

Central Committee Meeting
January 31, 1983



By
GUS HALL
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SUMMARY REMARKS ON DISCUSSION OF MAIN REPORT

"STATE OF THE UNION = STATE OF EMERGENCY"

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING, JANUARY 29-31 1983

I am confident we are in agreement that this has been a fine, productive and well-focused meeting of our Central Committee. It especially focused on the questions around the Party's role in the economic emergency - as you will see in the Main Report, "State of the Union = State of Emergency."

One of the special aspects of the meeting was Comrade Henry Winston's exceptional report on 65 years of socialism in the U.S.S.R. - a report on our participation in the Moscow anniversary celebrations.

Comrade James Jackson's fine speech on the significance of Karl Marx today set the stage for our celebration of the Marx Centennial. One of the events will be a two-day conference (March 19-20) "Karl Marx and the Revolutionary Movement Today," co-sponsored by POLITICAL AFFAIRS and the PEOPLES SCHOOL FOR MARXIST STUDIES.

The special reports by Comrades Arnold Becchetti, Charlene Mitchell, Sylvia London and James Steele all added rich dimensions to our meeting.

Following are some summary remarks on the discussion and deliberations of this meeting.

This meeting is a measure of how the Party is changing and growing. It demonstrated with a great deal of evidence and witnesses that our Party is healthy - politically and ideologically. There is a new sense of confidence. There is an exciting atmosphere of action-oriented Party spirit.

The experiences of the period we just examined in this meeting is proof positive that there is no contradiction between mass work and our emphasis on building the Party.

On the contrary, this meeting demonstrated there is no contradiction between doing fine Communist mass work and building a mass Communist Party.

Comrade Kendra was right on target. Now we have to use a different measure of what we consider success. We have to include Party building in our standards for success and achievement.

With Comrade Sylvia London now heading up the Cadre Commission

Comrade Evelina Alarcon introduced a very stimulating and important feature of the meeting - an example of a Communist approach to how to fight for change and how to pursue correcting course. She described her own experiences in a self-critical manner.

This was an important and illuminating lesson for the whole Party, especially in the area of Party building. It was a good lesson in integrating the Communist essence and struggling for the Party's public presence.

Comrade Judith LeBlanc's experiences gave us more insights into recruiting. Your response to her remarks proved this. Comrade Judith's experience speaks well for working boldly. This came through clearly. It is a freshness, a boldness that comes from a correct understanding of where people are at. It is rooted in a deep sense of confidence in people, in the Party, in the science of Marxism-Leninism, in the working class.

Field organizers, however, should not be limited to the national level. Districts can do field organizing too. Just about every district needs field work. There

This work need not be done only by full-time comrades. Unemployed comrades who have a lot of spare time can do this work and make a tremendous contribution.

If we are aiming for a Party organization in every state and in the farm areas as well, then this approach becomes very important.

On some specific questions:

1) Gridlock. I guess this is still mainly a big city word related to traffic jams.

You should know that the term comes from a flow of electrons and electric current along a grid. A blockade of the current, or when the current gets locked up, it is called a gridlock.

This is like an airlock in a carburator - an air bubble.

All this is simply applied to a big city traffic jam and you get a lock up - a gridlock.

For places like Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington, Oregon and Nevada, where logs are floated down rivers, I thought of the log jam concept.

For other states I'll have to come up with another concept. But anyone who has ever transported logs down a river knows what it's like to find the key log creating a jam!

2) On the experiences of the Chrysler workers and our Party's role. The real issue was not whether the rank and file or individuals should have issued statements. That was all positive.

The issue was that at that moment there were no Party statements. Leading comrades discussed what others should do, but not the Party's role. The Party remained behind the scenes.

The material that was issued in the name of others was on a very minimum level. And there were some very basic questions involved.

The DAILY WORLD did play a role. But those statements were not adequate either because they did not go into the more basic questions.

Why should not the Communist Party have had a good statement? That was the issue. And it should not be distorted.

We should draw lessons from what the Canadian Chrysler workers did. We finally did issue a statement and sent congratulation greetings to the Canadian Party and through the Party to the Chrysler workers. We should draw lessons that we can learn from this experience. It is not enough for us to issue statements after the struggle is over.

3) On the question of labor leaders belonging to and working with the Democratic Party.

This is an important question. First, I think we have to understand and accept the reality that most trade union leaders do just that - on all levels - top, middle and local levels. Therefore, when we approach this question we also have to understand that we have to work with them.

It is much too sweeping to say that such trade union leaders cannot lead in the economic struggles. In fact, most of them take good positions on Reaganomics.

Most of these same leaders worked in Congressional Districts in a very fine independent way. We should not move ourselves into a narrow, isolated position. We must keep in mind that it will narrow our base of mass work if we do. And, in addition, this is not working or approaching our mass work dialectically.

4) On left-led organizations.

transmission belt organization

I think there have been some distortions of our position, especially in "private coffee klutches." It is very harmful to distort what was actually said.

The Main Report clearly states that because of the crisis if the left-led organizations respond to the issues of the crisis they can grow tremendously and quickly.

However, although I did not raise it in my Report, I think there is a question as to whether all of these organizations should be membership-based.

I do have questions about this which I raised in the Political Bureau. The question is whether some of the left-led organizations should be based on councils. Some may become more productive if they are councils.

I did not raise this in my Report because we did not come to any conclusions or reach any agreement. However, now that it has come up I have given my opinion.

In many districts there is a problem that we need to resolve. The problem is that some left-led organizations compete in the Party for members. This becomes a serious diversion.

If these left-led organizations would reach out to recruit broad masses this competition would be eliminated. We need to take a good look at this problem in order to alleviate unnecessary pressure on Party members.

5) On the left in the trade union movement.

There seem to be some who think left forms, especially on the rank and file level, are out of date. There are some arguments that move in this direction.

I think such concepts themselves are out of date.

The left sector changes in many ways, but it will always be a part of mass movements. Left forms that advocate left positions are always necessary. Life does not divide into Communist Party, the center and the right.

We have to ask: Can we effectively develop the concept of class struggle trade unionism without left forms to project such concepts into the trade union movement?

Can we effectively fight against racism without left forms as instruments through which to broaden and raise the struggle to higher levels.

Can we effectively present the question of nationalization of industries and fight for it without left forms?

Can we effectively fight imperialist ideology or acts of aggression without left forms?

Can we effectively fight the big lie and anti-communism through only the Party - without left forms?

We should think whether we can generally develop militant concepts of struggle without the participation of left forms. I don't think we can. From every angle - left forms are absolutely necessary.

Which way have the center forces moved in this period of sharpening class struggles? They have not moved to the right. They have moved left. For these forces you need a place, a home. This argues for left forms. These are fundamental questions.

I need not argue that I am for building a mass Communist Party - as soon and as big as possible. But, the Party cannot replace the left.

So, if the Party can not take over and replace the left. And if we agree the center forces can not. There is only one conclusion possible. A left.

To have any meaning, a political current must have an organizational form. The logical conclusion is a need for left forms.

As the Main Report suggests, we should take a look at specific forms. Perhaps some old left forms are not necessary.

However, there should be no sweeping decisions. We should not draw wrong conclusions that there is no place for left forms. This is related to a certain liquidationist attitude that goes further than just left forms.

THE CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS - IN RETROSPECT

The draft section which you received just after the 1982 elections omitted some specific conclusions concerning the California elections. Therefore, the California comrades did not have the benefit of the full statement.

There have been some differences in the Party leadership on some electoral questions. And discussions are continuing. There is nothing wrong with this.

We received materials that show there is not full agreement on the election results in California. Statements were sent in stating that the Communist Party should have electoral relationships with the Peace and Freedom Party. Some letters raised this as a question and argued the point that the Party must have such relations.

This was never the issue. Of course it would be beneficial if we had a better description or analysis of the forces in the Peace and Freedom Party because it seems there are some difficulties in working with some of the elements in this Party.

The question also was not whether the Peace and Freedom candidates should have withdrawn when the primaries were over and Tom Bradley became the Democratic Party candidate.

I think it is appropriate here to explain what I was trying to forewarn about in Milwaukee.

After Tom Bradley won the Democratic primary and became the candidate for Governor, it became necessary to shift tactics, to reorder emphasis.

What should that shift have been? Remember, I say this in retrospect. And, as we well know, it is always easier to look back and give a better answer.

First, there should have been a sharp expose of the right wing Republican candidate George Deukmejian. This became an absolute necessity.

Second, to raise publicly and forcefully the role that racism would play in such a campaign. To raise the fact that Bradley would be the first Black Governor and emphasize the blow it would be against racism. To describe and explain what it would mean to the people of California to elect a Black Governor.

Third. We should have emphasized and focused on the differences between the two candidates. Bradley and Deukmejian were not alike, certainly not on the issues around racism and discrimination, but also on other issues. Deukmejian was supported by all the ultra-right, racist, war mongering Reaganites.

Four. No one should have seriously raised the lesser evil issue with such candidates. When they did we should have taken them on.

We should have conducted a more probing discussion on political independence and how it would be served by the defeat of the ultra-right candidate.

We should have stated openly that this was not the race through which to express a progressive vote for political independence. It would have been best served by defeating Deukmejian.

The advocacy and fight for political independence is a principled question. How to promote it, however, depends on a concrete set of circumstances. How to fight for it calls for flexibility.

There are important lessons in this race. Had we fought more vigorously for our concept of political independence in the specific California situation our relationships would be stronger with the non-Party forces now.

We should have more confidence that if we explain correctly people will accept, understand and agree with our positions, even when the problems are complicated.

The coverage of the race by the PEOPLE'S WORLD was a reflection of the problems. It kind of withdrew from the Governor's race completely. One column did raise one minor issue in Bradley's defense. It did one column exposing Deukmejian's right-wing connections. One was given the impression that the PEOPLE'S WORLD took a hands-off attitude.

It is true, the race became a very difficult and complicated one. And we should keep in mind that it is always easier to look back and criticize weaknesses and errors. However, if we learn and draw the proper conclusions we will come out much stronger and wiser.

ON CULTURAL WORK

There was a section in my Report on cultural work. Inadvertently, I missed the page when I gave the report yesterday. So let me place it now so that it becomes part of the Report and with additional remarks.

On the national tour this past summer it became obvious that work in the field of culture has emerged in many districts on a new level. Many comrades and people around the Party are involved in many areas - writers, poets, artists, photographers, singers, musicians.

We are changing in so many ways, including how many more people we have who are demanding that the Party establish a planned, organized approach to our work in this important field.

The national tour convinced us that we must now, without delay, reorganize our National Cultural Commission. We must also take a new look at establishing a cultural magazine that will reflect our viewpoint.

We are convinced that our approach to cultural work simply does not now measure up to the demands as well as the needs.

Nationally, working class cultural movements and the cultural expressions of the racially and nationally oppressed are taking root while others are well established. There is so much that is healthy happening that we must now move quickly to put our work in this area on a well-planned, well-organized consistent basis.

ON RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

It has also become clear that we must take a new look and a new approach to the movements in the field of religion. Religious movements and institutions have emerged as important components of all people's movements.

In view of this we have initiated a national conference that will take place in April. Invitations and publicity will be sent out very soon.

It is the general consensus that we should invite Party and non-Party participants to this conference. And, that we should establish a national commission to guide and plan work in this area.

Religious movements are also playing a tremendous role in the struggle for peace and against imperialist aggression, especially in South and Central America.

Churches and synagogues are increasingly active in the economic struggles, in feeding and housing the homeless and hungry.

They are an important element in the struggle against racism.

We must begin to take an organized approach to these movements, become involved and continue to build close, healthy relationships with the churches and synagogues in our communities.

The April national conference will go a long way toward realizing these goals.

1983

SPECIAL POINT - SOME QUESTIONS OF SECURITY

As the result of a serious discussion, the Political Bureau asked me to report to the Central Committee and to raise certain questions here.

There were extensive discussions, but I have been asked to talk to you in my summary remarks about one important question.

We should not be surprised that there is adequate evidence to conclude that the enemy has increased its activities in all fields and all movements, including around the Party. This is clearly related to the reactionary overall policies of the Reagan Administration. This should be no surprise because the very fact of our , recent successes would stimulate this response.

The enemy has especially increased its political activities with the main aim of diverting, disrupting and destabilizing movements, including the Party. In the main, it is dirty tricks of a political and ideological nature.

In just about every movement we see evidence of these dirty tricks. In many cases the disruptions are carried out by elements who are or have been active in some of the phoney left groups.

There are not many cases of open enemy agent activity. Although we have found some cases. However, this kind of activity is limited.

What we have to understand is that in and around the Party the most effective work is done through unsuspecting people.

I guess some of the older comrades have forgotten the bad old days. And most of the younger comrades have never experienced them. This may explain why it is relatively easy for the enemy to use unsuspecting people because of the relative inexperience with enemy tactics.

Therefore, let me place the problem, without going into detail. Keep in mind that in the Political Bureau we fully discussed the details, which are not necessary for our purposes here.

Precisely because we are growing and becoming increasingly effective, especially in the mass work we are beginning to do in the fields of unemployment and the struggle for peace, the enemy is also becoming active in trying to disrupt and destabilize our work.

We must, therefore, tighten up in a number of areas. This must become a companion-piece of all of our work.

The main instrument of the enemy in the Party is gossip, slander and elements of factionalism that crops up every once in a while. The enemy uses the gossip grapevines. The enemy in a sense taps' the gossip grapevines.

The aim is to create doubts, raise questions. They just drop an idea, a rumor, a story and the grapevine does the rest of the job.

PARTY STANDARDS

In this period Party standards are most important. They are always important, but especially so in this kind of period.

When the enemy is more active, living up to Party standards becomes critical. Low moral standards are the instruments of the enemy.

Moral standards include everyone. We have to re-establish the concept that the higher a comrade is in the Party structure the more exacting and demanding we must be that he/she live up to and serve as examples for others.

This period calls for a tightening up on Party standards, especially moral standards of behavior. This is necessary for two major reasons:

1) Because we are growing. And very often this is precisely why people join our Party. Of course they like our politics. But they are also attracted to the kind of people we are. Because they discover we are the kind of people they have been looking for, the kind of people they want to be with and fight beside many decide to join our Party.

When we are building a mass Party this becomes a most important question. We must not for a moment think that when we do not live up to standards that we are getting away with something. Remember, if someone in the Party does not report wrong behavior, the enemy will because it serves disruptive purposes. And then it becomes part of the gossip.

Violation of standards becomes an instrument in the hands of the enemy. Therefore, we have to insist on higher standards.

2) Standards are important because the workers, the public, measure us by our standards. This has a big impact and influence on a person's decision to join our Party. It also influences who joins our Party.

Let me give you an example of how effective the enemy gossip chain is. The FBI is in the habit of dropping ideas and rumors into newspapers, knowing someone will pick them up and spread them. The FBI drops hints, whispers, knowing that someone will pick them up and accept them as truth. They take our political and tactical positions and twist them out of shape. They take a good idea and give it a twist - then drop it into the gossip-mill.

Some of the factional tendencies are very twisted concepts. There are cases where they take a statement of some Party leader, give it a twist to make it sound like the opposite, and then drop it into the gossip-mill.

When comrades take part in gossip or slander it becomes difficult to tell the difference between such behavior and the enemy because this is just what the enemy does. If all comrades live up to Party standards, then we will have no problem knowing who the enemy is.

Therefore, the only way to put an end to these kinds of problems is for all comrades to:

- 1) Conduct themselves in a way that makes it impossible for the enemy to operate.

2) We must put an end to all gossip and slander.

3) When you hear it don't join it. And, if you think the question is important, raise it in the Party. When you do it this way it does not become gossip, but a constructive correction. We have been consciously encouraging this kind of criticism.

4) Finally, we must restate that factionalism is not permitted in this Party. It is a political and even a constitutional question.

Somehow there are a few who think factionalizing and slander is permitted - if it is done openly. It is against Party rules and Party spirit - in all its many facets.

COMMUNIST MATURITY

All the foregoing is part of the struggle to become more mature Communists. But there are other features, other characteristics of Communist maturity I want to mention here.

Let me say first, however, that our Party membership is becoming both politically and ideologically more mature and sophisticated. They are also becoming more demanding, less tolerant of uncommunist-like behavior, in all its forms.

Our Party is becoming more working class in membership, in style of work. This changes many things. When the working class component increases it means the membership takes less kindly to any petty bourgeois traits in Communist leaders. It is less likely to tolerate these traits now than in years past.

For example, our Party now frowns on phrasemongering. Our Party reacts very negatively to signs of any phoniness or cover up. It does not take kindly to talking down to Party members. The Party does not warm up to anyone who is self-centered, pompous or petty. This is a growing attitude, a new healthy sense of self-respect.

The Party does not warm up to anyone who is self-centered and pompous.

There is a new level of rejection of these weaknesses. Therefore, we in leading positions have to be aware of these new pressures and demands for new standards.

One is never too old or not old enough to work at becoming a more mature Communist.

If we do not respond now we will have much more severe problems as we grow.

We have so many young comrades who are growing so fast. They need our guidance. They need our constant help and encouragement. But most of all they need us to be examples of what they are striving for.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ESSENCE

On the question of being revolutionaries. How to be a revolutionary is an important question.

While we are not now in any way entering a revolutionary situation, this is, nevertheless, not something we can put on the shelf for some future time. Preparing ourselves and the masses must be a consistent process. In a sense, everything we do now is preparation. Our work now must be a factor in the future developments.

Lenin's thinking on this is timely and instructive for us. He believed that from the viewpoint of method it is extremely important that a revolutionary situation should not be regarded as "a gift from heaven," independent of the will and consciousness of the people. It is wrong to think that until such a "heaven-sent" opportunity appears there is nothing for a revolutionary to do. Through its activities the revolutionary party of the working class helps create a revolutionary situation.

Lenin insisted that the Communist Party must always understand the mood of the working class and study the people's thought patterns.

We must understand that objective developments prepare the objective situation and this pushes people in the right direction.

However, a revolutionary situation will never be ripe until the subjective forces - the people - are ready. That is our responsibility - to prepare the people. That cannot be left for some far away future time, nor left to spontaneity.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

Therefore, on the immediate tasks to move people in the right direction.

First, the new U.S. Congress is now in session. And, from all we can see so far, the Administration is still cutting, the Democrats keep talking about "less cuts," but still cuts.

Our job is to help mobilize and organize people to put tremendous - constant, heavy, relentless - pressure and demands on Congress.

We need to organize committees - everywhere - till we can organize mass pressure.

We do not yet know if the AFL-CIO will initiate an early demonstration. In any case, we must be active now in organizing marches, demonstrations and protests - of steelworkers, autoworkers, youth, seniors, etc.

We should not see these actions as contrary or in conflict with the planned August 27th demonstration. Rather, we should see these actions as helping to build for the 27th action.

We must organize mass delegations from Congressional districts.

There are many, many ways of applying pressure on all levels.

NOW'S THE TIME - CPUSA-SPONSORED MASS PROTEST RALLIES

We must begin to move on the idea that the Communist Party - while being involved in helping to organize broad mass movements - must also organize mass protest rallies of the unemployed in its own name NOW.

There are many reasons. But a major one is the necessity of projecting the public presence of the Party.

This is a moment to test the political waters. It is most important to test the political waters at certain moments - to test the thinking and mood of the people.

This happened in the 1930's. And one very good way is to organize protest rallies - not just forums, public meetings or discussions. But the Party must go out to speak to the unemployed to protest.

We must plan early dates. Once the date is set then we must go out in the streets and distribute leaflets and hold streetcorner meetings to prepare and build for the rallies. There is not one of you here today who can not make a good rally speech on unemployment.

This is not something you should see as an option to be discussed and considered - but, rather, as a Central Committee decision to be implemented by the whole Party as soon as you return to your districts.

Let's see how big we can make these rallies - keeping in mind, however, that they need not be big to happen. And they must happen - in every city.

These rallies should not, in any way, be counterposed to the work we must do in united front movements and formations. Our rallies and meetings must be synchronized with the broader movements.

Now is the time to set a new stage in the building of our mass, working class Communist Party, U.S.A.

Let's all put everything we have into it.
And, good luck!