

political affairs

JOURNAL OF MARXIST THOUGHT

4th National Convention — YWLL

James Steele • Gus Hall • Roque Ristorucci

The Crisis in Steel
Rick Nagin

On Labor Political Action
Patrick Williams

Left Center Unity in Steel
Herb Kaye

On Reflection and Ideology
Morris Colman

60th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution
Leonid Brezhnev • Gus Hall • Henry Winston

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From the Editors to You . . .

At year's end, we wish to extend to all *Political Affairs* readers our sincere wishes for a very happy holiday season. In our pages we have shared with our readers projections and analyses of the multifaceted struggle of the American working class and people for detente and disarmament, equality, jobs and social progress. We have examined some outstanding ideological and theoretical questions facing the Communist movement. We have highlighted the history-making accomplishments registered, as well as the challenges and obstacles posed by imperialism, along the path to mankind's great common future—socialism.

On this occasion we would like to pose before our readers the facts of another and, for us, no less critical question—the finances of magazine publication. Being devoted to socialism, we are no less acutely affected by the problems of capitalism. The price of paper and our other expenses of publication have practically doubled over the last three years. We face scheduled increases in taxes and mailing costs during the coming year. Commercial publications respond to these conditions by an escalated struggle for advertising revenues, or, if they have a sufficiently elite circulation, by raising subscription prices sky-high, or, in an increasing number of cases, by reducing frequency of publication, cutting quality and, finally, ceasing publication completely. The publications favored by Big Business survive and prosper. Economic pressures toward monopolization take a constant toll among magazines both large and small.

Needless to say, we have no intention of folding. Rather, we plan during the coming year to build on successes registered in 1977 in increasing the number of subscriptions, commercial outlets and bundle orders of *Political Affairs*. But having no large advertisers who will happily pass their increased costs along, we must appeal to our readers to help close the yawning gap in our budget. It is for this reason that we conduct an annual fund appeal in the name of the two outstanding former editors Betty Gannett and Hyman Lumer. Please do send a check for the Betty Gannett-Hyman Lumer Memorial Fund.

We do have a special readership. It is one that finds in Marxism-Leninism, in working-class ideology, the guidance to further the struggles for labor unity, for Black liberation, for women's equality, for a better tomorrow. We are confident that you, our readers, will respond generously to this appeal for funds, as you have in the past, knowing that it is your contributions which will make possible the continuation and expansion of our work.

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The YWLL in the Fight for Youth Rights

JAMES STEELE

This convention, with the help of every participant, can make an outstanding contribution to promoting a new level of youth unity. It can be a magnificent factor in propelling the decisive sections of the youth rapidly forward along paths of mass united action that can win victories in respect to jobs, affirmative action, democratic rights, educational, social and cultural needs, peace and international solidarity, in the period ahead.

In this connection, I would like to emphasize three inter-related points.

First, the YWLL and youth generally must be concerned not only with the creation of jobs but also with the quality of jobs created—for whom, at what wages and with what working conditions. We are for *meaningful jobs*, that is, jobs through which young people can help solve the urgent social problems—housing, mass transportation, etc.—confronting their communities and the country. It is necessary to fight against the sub-minimum wage and also against any other concept which pits youth against the trade union movement, to oppose so-called solutions to the youth unemployment problem which give youth jobs at the expense of others, or vice versa.

Monopoly would like nothing better than to be able to use the vast mass of unemployed youth as a battering ram against organized labor. Big business would take glee especially at seeing Black and other unemployed minority youth pitted against the trade unions, particularly in those industries which remain virtually all white or in which there are still rigidly segregated job classifications and apprenticeship programs. This is a key aspect of the new role of racism and of anti-union concepts in this period.

It is necessary for the whole working class and people's movement to understand the imminent danger to trade unions, to the people's standard of living, which is based in the first place on union wages, and to democracy, posed by the following facts: By the end of the summer in New York City the jobless rate for Black and Puerto Rican teen-

agers, 16-19, was 86.5 per cent and for their white counterparts it was 73.9 per cent.

Many cities with similar unemployment rates are centers of steel, auto, electric, shipping, of the key sectors of the industrial working class, points of strength of the trade union movement in general, and the militant upsurge of the rank and file in particular. Thus, the battle against youth joblessness is in part a fight for them to be trade unionists, a force for trade unionism, not against it.

Youth must be convinced to not take someone else's job, but to fight for solutions which get at the general *and* the special problem. Youth must be educated equally to the vital importance of union jobs and to the need for militant trade unionism and labor-youth unity. Special youth jobs legislation and the shorter workweek with no reduction in pay are key to solving the problem of youth joblessness, because they are also key trade union demands. Youth's fight is then not against the labor movement, but complementary to it.

Second, this convention must analyze certain new features of racism and plan what to do to strengthen youth's fight against it. As the Draft Discussion Document pointed out:

The racist offensive of state monopoly capital has reached new dimensions. An all-out assault on the historic civil rights gains of the Black liberation movement is fully under way. No civil rights law, ruling or program is safe. A new legislative-judicial-political structure is being erected on the economic inequality of Black and other oppressed minority workers. The aim is to bring back the apartheid-like "separate but equal" days of Plessy vs. Ferguson in a new form.

The Nixon-Ford Supreme Court majority have become "judicial storm troopers" in the drive to once again make racism constitutional. The Supreme Court has ruled that victims of racial discrimination must now prove "discriminatory intent" in addition to discriminatory practice. It has ruled that segregated housing is "not necessarily unconstitutional."

In another recent decision, it upheld the "legality" of seniority systems that discriminate against minority and women workers. This is a tremendous setback to affirmative action. And now in a case known as the Bakke case, it will de-

James Steele is national chairman of the Young Workers Liberation League. The following is from his report to the Fourth National Convention of the YWLL, October 7, 1977.

side on the constitutionality of affirmative action in public education.

In our country and in the youth movement racism is the main obstacle to progress. It is the decisive roadblock to unity. The new wave in the racist offensive poses serious new problems and difficulties for the struggle for youth rights.

Without question the destruction of affirmative action is the point of concentration of all racist elements from the top circles of big business to the halls of the United States Congress to the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party. Why? Because affirmative actions is the decisive vehicle for achieving the demands flowing from the new stage of the Black liberation movement, the freedom struggles of other oppressed minority peoples and the women's movement.

At this new stage the focus is on advancement towards equality in substance. Today, it is not only a question of legal and civil rights, but even more, of economic equality and human rights. The struggle is for equality in every aspect of life.

What Gus Hall wrote in 1970 is even more true today:

The Black liberation struggle has moved into the realm of economic and political equality, which means jobs, promotions, access to the professions and to business. In the political arena it means the extension of registration and voting opportunities to all and the election of Black public officials on every level.

The demands now go into areas that big business considers its very special preserve, on which the monopolists have placed a "No Trespassing" sign—the prerogative of making profits.

At this stage, the civil rights movement comes up against the workings of state monopoly conspiracy. In some cases the government runs interference for the monopolists; in others, the government expresses support by silently condoning abuses. (*Imperialism Today*, International Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 149.)

Affirmative action is the means to ensure equality, to compensate—through special measures—for the 350 years of inequality and for discrimination which continues to this day. Without such measures, talk of equality is just that—empty rhetoric totally devoid of meaning. The fight for equality opens the way for the advance not only of Black and other minorities, but for all.

It is vital to convince young people, especially white youth, that there can be no unity without a

consistent fight for equality. This means, in the first place, breaking up and overcoming the legacy and the structure of racist exploitation capitalism has created over the decades, generations and centuries.

Monopoly capital does not want affirmative action measures because it does not want equality and integration to be instituted and enforced at all levels, and the greater unity of the multiracial, multinational working class which would flow from such an achievement in the basic production industries. Big business wants to preserve the racist wage differential and seniority systems which, with the cooperation of class collaborationist union leaders, enables it to maintain the profitable "last hired, first fired" practice. Big business wants to preserve the structure of discrimination which allows it to rake in billions a year in extra profits and to prevent the bulk of the labor force from being organized.

In order for the freedom movements of the oppressed peoples to score further advances, to safeguard past gains and win new victories, and the country as a whole to make democratic progress, it is vitally important for the youth to play a fully progressive role.

This means the YWLL's and youth's fight against racism must become more concrete. The focus must now be put on affirmative action and the methods of carrying it out, especially busing and quotas (which are floors not ceilings).

In this context, the League must do much, much more in popular, flexible ways to influence the thinking of masses of white youth. We have to more thoroughly, patiently and painstakingly explain to them why affirmative action is indispensable to achieving equality and why it is in their self-interest. For example, Congressman Conyers recently pointed out that of the 240,000 jobs created specifically for youth this summer, only a scant 30,000 went to Black youth. This underlines the necessity of building into any jobs creation program guarantees of a special approach to the hardest hit—Black and other nationally oppressed youth.

Without clear affirmative action provisions, such as those contained in the Harrington bill, it is possible for hundreds of thousands, even millions, of jobs to be created for youth in general without making an appreciable dent in the vast joblessness among Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and other minority young people. This is precisely what is lacking in the present version of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill. The under twenty jobless are ex-

cluded from the bill.

All of this points to the over-riding importance of winning a favorable decision in the Bakke case as one of the key fronts in the fight for affirmative action.

An indispensable feature of the struggle for affirmative action is the task of refuting the concept of "reverse racism." There is no basis to this concept. In no aspect of life (employment, education, income, housing, health care, legal rights, political representation) of Black and other oppressed people have inequality and discrimination been overcome. Far from being "reverse racism," affirmative action seeks to reverse the effects of racism past and present.

The third point I would like to stress in relation to the development of a program of united youth action is the need to raise the young generation's international solidarity and struggle for peace, disarmament and an end to the arms race to a qualitatively new level. We have said many times that it is not possible to secure the material and spiritual well-being of this nation's youth without detente, without a drastic cut in the military budget and without spending the vast sums thus saved on programs which create jobs and meet the people's urgent social needs. With the development of the neutron bomb and the cruise missile, this proposition takes on added significance. To prevent U.S. imperialism from unleashing new wars, from using nuclear weapons, is a task of international solidarity with which there is no parallel. Without peace the independence and social progress of every country is in doubt.

The struggle for peace and detente, combined with militant opposition to the aggressive and neo-colonial policies of the imperialist ruling class of *this country* is the heartbeat of the internationalism of U.S. young people. International solidarity, that is, the common action of the working and oppressed peoples, of the youth and students of the socialist countries, the national liberation movements, and the working-class and anti-monopoly movement in the capitalist countries is the most essential vitamin nourishing the progressive development of young people in our country. Without the kind of internationalism expressed in the slogan of the 11th World Youth Festival, "For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship," it would be impossible for our nation's youth to develop a healthy outlook.

Millions of youth throughout the United States are being deprived of a decent job, quality education, vocational training, recreational, athletic and cultural facilities by every dollar the Carter Administration pours down the rat hole called the Pentagon. Every dollar spent on the CIA, on bribing foreign leaders, on propping up racist and fascist regimes strangles the hopes and aspirations of our youth for a decent future.

We are showing youth that there can be no job security for young steelworkers in South Chicago if there is no security and self-determination for the Black majority in South Africa. There can be no youth rights in San Francisco if there are no democratic and human rights in Santiago. There can be no social justice in New York if there is no just peace in the Middle East. There will be no sounds of children learning and laughing ringing the halls of new or reopened schools in Detroit so long as the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are ringed by the nuclear arsenal of NATO and U.S. imperialism.

This growing mass sentiment is being translated into concrete struggle against the Pentagon and the multinational corporations, and into growing involvement of the youth in the fight for peace, friendship, cooperation, support for the national liberation movements. This mass development among the youth must be reflected in the U.S. movement and delegation for the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students to be held next year in Havana, Cuba. In our view the Festival movement can and should be an unprecedentedly broad, representative cross section of the young generation— young trade unionists and elected officials, unemployed youth, student leaders, artists, athletes and professionals, Black, Brown and white.

The demands which will emerge not only from this Convention but also from the exchange of ideas with other youth and student organizations and forces at every level, are achievable if there is sufficient mass pressure on President Carter, Congress and big business. This Convention must help initiate a period of unprecedented mass direct action of the youth in this country.

The anger and militant mood of masses of youth is now at a new level. Virtually every hiring or taking of applications is turned into a mass demonstration for jobs. Effective, demonstrative channels are needed to enable youth to let the "powers that be" directly feel their militancy, anger and fighting

spirit. Now is the time for marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, mass lobbies and the like.

In 1962 Martin Luther King led a delegation of civil rights workers to meet with President Kennedy. JFK told them that he "supported" their demands but that there just were not enough votes in Congress to pass a major civil rights bill. But Dr. King said, "Oh yes, there is!" Afterwards, walking down the White House driveway, he turned to his co-workers and said, "There's enough votes but they've got to hear our feet."

The result is history. One of the greatest chapters of mass struggle was written. The mass grassroots movements and struggles expressed in the historic quarter of a million strong March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs found enough votes to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and several other pieces of basic legislation.

We call upon the youth of the United States to follow this example, "Let them hear our feet!" Mass youth unity, mass youth action can find enough votes to pass the Harrington bill. Following the example of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., of the working class and the Black liberation movements, the youth can help to write new chapters in the textbook of united mass action. Next year is the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King. The Fourth National Convention of the YWLL welcomes and whole-heartedly endorses the initiatives of the Youth Council of the National Coalition for Economic Justice in calling for a mass action in Washington, D.C. for jobs and affirmative action to commemorate the legacy of Dr. King and to advance the fight for the passage of the Harrington bill. From our point of view this action could also take place in conjunction with April 4, designated by WFDY as International Day of Solidarity with Youth Fighting Racism in the United States. It could be a day when the youth of the world tell Jimmy Carter to "look homeward" and meet the human rights of U.S. youth.

The consistent fight for unity at every level is perhaps the most important and special contribution the League makes, in thought and action, to the mass education of our generation. Present day developments, especially the growing anger, militancy and radicalization of masses of youth require that the League intensify its efforts in uniting youth in struggle for their economic, social and political rights. We must step up the struggle for unity at

every level, in the shop, union local, community and on the campus.

Clearly these times call for a bigger, more influential Young Workers Liberation League. Only a League that is substantially larger, quantitatively and qualitatively, can carry out the tasks which this convention will set before our organization.

This Convention must boldly clear away the obstacles which stand in the way of the YWLL's rapid growth and development.

Although our League has made significant progress since the last national convention, we still must say that the two main obstacles which we have to overcome are sectarianism and the tendency to function like a general political organization or political party.

At all levels we still have not mastered the united front method of mobilizing and leading young people. As a consequence the League still tends to try to do everything and say everything for youth rather than focusing on working among and with youth. Many League branches have not sunk sufficiently deep roots in their community or campus.

Pre-convention discussion brought forward many examples of our organization's sectarian habits and of our persistent struggle to break from them. But frankly, comrades, we should be further along the road than we are. The basis for success in the struggle against sectarian methods of work lies in a correct understanding of the character of the YWLL. Are we consistently a youth organization in our day to day activities or are we guilty of what could be called "adulthood"?

A youth organization, if it is to play a mass role, must be fundamentally different in character than a political party. The essence of this difference lies in the fact that the YWLL's fundamental mission in life, its reason for being, is to educate young people. Therefore its standards, discipline, criteria for membership, level of activity, forms of struggle and inner-life must correspond to the condition of being an organization geared to educating youth. The Young Workers Liberation League must actively recruit youth who are in most instances unfamiliar with the revolutionary working-class science of Marxism-Leninism, who are also just coming to struggle itself.

Everything the League does, every structure and initiative must be based on this reality. The primary aim of every activity must be to help youth learn—chiefly through their own experience—how to

struggle most effectively for their immediate needs. In the process a higher education—a growing understanding of the need for socialism—will take place.

That is why we say that the YWLL is a mass school of struggle. And we also declare that this school has an open admissions policy. There must be absolutely no barriers to membership, no criteria of a certain level of ideological or theoretical development, for youth who are honest and sincere and want to struggle for a better life.

Comrades, our Convention—the historic Fourth National Convention—must prepare the League to play a much broader, more dynamic mass role among the young generation. It must help our YWLL become more effective in uniting and educating the youth, in defending their rights. But to be more effective we must become more youthful, more outgoing and self-confident. The YWLL must be as much a movement, with the style and spirit of active, militant movements, as we are an organization.

We must learn to concentrate fully on meeting the main need of youth: education. There is no question that young people want to fight, but is that sufficient, is that enough? No, it is not. Youth must *learn how* to fight. The main role of the YWLL is to give youth experiences enriched by theory which enable them to learn how to make deep-going changes in the system of monopoly capitalism and a fundamental change of that system.

By the very nature of how youth learn this means that the YWLL is a place in which young people learn not only theory, but also how to make leaflets and posters, how to run meetings, speak in public, circulate the press, conduct electoral campaigns, run for public office, fight for unity, get good grades, be active in the trade union, community or civic organization, how to set an example for other youth, how to be a good leader and an independent-thinking person.

Yes, and enrolling in the mass school of the YWLL also means learning to sing and dance and

have a good time. It means creative personal development and building strong character and developing self-confident young men and women who understand the need for multi-racial, multi-national unity, who have a working class outlook and can think for themselves. This is what will help fortify youth for the difficult days ahead—for the immediate period and for the long haul.

We declare our readiness, our eagerness and determination to help our generation make history, to carry forward the torch carried by earlier generations in the fight against colonialism, slavery, war and fascism. It is the task of our generation to do in our time as they did in theirs—to educate, mobilize and lead in the battle for peace, jobs, equality and progress, to be a reservoir of support for the working class, a reserve of strength for the movements of the oppressed peoples. It is our task to help prepare the youth as trade unionists, peace activists, community leaders, elected officials, artists, athletes, scientists and professionals, to build a country free of exploitation, poverty, racism and oppression so that our generation and the ones which follow can enjoy the fruits of a better life—a socialist life in which the working people are the collective masters and determiners of their own destiny.

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YWLL: A Tradition Continued

GUS HALL

As Comrade Jim Steele said, you have come a long way. I will never forget your founding convention in Chicago, seven and a half years ago, as long as I live, including the loud boos from those who thought my remarks against tactics of individual terrorism and violence were counterproductive.

When a movement or an organization has passed the half-century mark it has earned the right to be called a tradition. And you are the inheritors of a proud, illustrious tradition. It is a 55-year tradition of Marxist-Leninist-led organizations of our youth. It is a history of achievements and significant contributions. The generations of young Communists have influenced our history. It is a unique tradition that only you can rightly claim. A measure of the lasting nature of that contribution is the fact that so many who received their training in the Marxist-Leninist youth organizations went on to become leaders of the trade unions and other mass organizations. And of course you can claim the honor that so many of the leading cadre of the Communist Party had their basic training as Communist youth. Most of the heroes who fought and died in the Spanish war against fascism received their political training in the Marxist-Leninist-led youth organizations.

●

The great upsurge and the movements against the war of aggression in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and for civil rights in the United States were historic struggles. They left deep everlasting footprints in our social and political landscape. Many of the forces, including many of the leaders who were involved, continue in struggle. But not all who were called leaders served well. Some have since become minor executives of corporations. Others, behind the subterfuge of "continuing the struggle from within the system," have in fact become part of the system. And yes, some have run away to grovel at the feet of 12-year-old gurus. These backsliders take solace from last Sunday's *New York Times* editorial, entitled, "Remembering Kent." The editorial stated: "What needs to be memorialized

(from the upsurge) is not confrontation but reconciliation." Yes, big business and the *New York Times* want reconciliation. Reconciliation with racism, with the fascist butchers in Chile, the racist colonial regimes in South Africa, in Puerto. Reconciliation with 70 per cent youth unemployment in the ghettos, and they want reconciliation with the closing of the steel mills. They want reconciliation with the evils of capitalism. That kind of reconciliation would be betrayal of the best interests of the people.

What needs to be memorialized is not reconciliation, but the constant renewal of struggle and confrontation with big business. The *New York Times* and big business want passive, silent generations.

Most of you are too young to remember Mark Rudd. He was one of the student leaders in the upsurge of the 1960s. I do not know what he has learned, or what he will do now that he has gone "public." But his father said, "Mark is now too old to be a revolutionary. He has passed his 30th birthday."

We should not be surprised or discouraged because some have defected or retired from activity and struggle at the age of 30. Every upsurge gives rise to some who are "flashes" on the passing scene. Their outlook and their activities were transitory because they did not understand or relate to the longer-range objective processes. They lacked stability because they did not relate to the class struggle or the working class. They go from highs to lows because they do not see the relationship between the immediate aims and the struggle for socialism. They did not understand the inner laws of capitalism which make any reconciliation impossible, which lead to sharper confrontations, and which give rise to ever new waves of movements and struggles.

Because some of those who have retired from struggle lacked depth they accommodated and succumbed to anti-Communism. It was also those who have left the struggles and movements who were the loudest in declaring that the Communist Party was "old hat," was "irrelevant" to the struggles.

When the movements and the people did not respond to their tactics based on their personal, sub-

Text of remarks of Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA, to the Fourth National Convention of the YWLL.

jective moods and desires, some took the path of acts of violence which had no relationship to mass movements, or the class enemy. Their individual efforts and sacrifices were dissipated, as if on a treadmill, going nowhere. After such a non-productive experience I suppose retirement at 30 seems logical.

There was one basic weakness in that period that we Communists must accept some responsibility for. We were not able to spread widely enough the "word"—the science of Marxism-Leninism. Because those who found Marxism-Leninism not only stayed with the struggles, but joined the YWLL and the Communist Party. In fact, they most likely are the majority on the National Council of our Party today. Their dedication and commitment became rooted in the realities of the objective processes. Their enthusiasm and confidence are fed by the knowledge that the objective processes, with inevitable force, move toward socialism.

This short excursion into history is to argue the point that those who retire from struggle are victims of big business propaganda. They mistakenly see an ebb in the process of mass currents as a defeat. They see a period of reassessment and regrouping as a dead end.

Instead of retirement at 30, Marxism-Leninism gives us a second wind at 30, a third wind at 60. And after that, all that is necessary is a booster shot once in a while.

Your Convention resolutions and Comrade Jim Steele's very excellent report are proof that you are in tune with today's realities, that you are plugged in to the problems of today's youth.

Past generations in the capitalist world have faced serious problems. But they can not be compared with the problems of your generation.

Past generations have been touched by and have experienced the effects of crises. What is new and unique is that now we have the birth of "crises generations," generations of youth who experience nothing but crises.

There is the continuous crisis of everyday living—of jobs;

There is the crisis of the danger of total nuclear destruction;

There is a crisis of health care and pollution of the environment;

There is a crisis of racism and discrimination;

There is a crisis in education—and on and on without end.

Other past societies have rejected some of their young. But monopoly capital has the depraved distinction of rejecting and devouring whole generations of youth.

No other class in history has condemned millions of youth to a lifetime of unemployment, to slums and malnutrition, from the cradle to the grave.

No other class in history has condemned and transformed millions into generations of hopelessness.

What flashes of degeneration and ugliness! The corruption of the most basic human values—

A government that cuts off school lunch programs and hounds people on welfare, but makes it possible for the rich corporate and bank executives to deduct from their taxes the cost of their business lunches and dinners and theater tickets for themselves and their guests;

A system that taxes those below the poverty level, but exempts those who make hundreds of thousands of dollars;

Only yesterday we saw the despicable scene of 100 senators who pass a law which makes it possible for 10-year-olds to be hired to work in the fields;

A president that tours the burned-out slum areas of New York, but only as a tourist;

Comrade Steele said Carter is more like a "southern fried Nixon." But being of an older generation, to me he sounds more like a "half-baked Herbert Hoover";

And the repulsive scene of 1,200 bankers on Wall Street who stood up and cheered Bert Lance, the finance-mobster from Georgia, but turned down an invitation to tour the slums of New York as "not in good taste";

A government that spends \$120 billion a year on a military budget for weapons of destruction, but refuses to spend \$120... for work projects, for reconstruction of our cities;

A government that pushes to produce a neutron bomb that will kill the workers in a shop, but will not harm the machines and the buildings;

A government that preaches about human rights throughout the world, but rejects even the smallest move toward affirmative action to eliminate the racist barriers which have for 300 years violated the elementary human rights of 40 millions of our citizens;

A system that keeps the Wilmington 10 behind bars without evidence, imprisons school teachers

for striking, but reduces the sentences of the Water-gate criminals to a few months.

●
Like the hurricanes in the Atlantic, a new crisis has hit the steel towns of our land. The inherently criminal and anti-human nature of capitalism is being enacted in these very days—in Campbell and Youngstown, Ohio; in Buffalo, New York; in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; in Woosterhem, Massachusetts.

It is impossible to feel fully the depth of the anguish, the fears, the insecurity of the young steelworkers and their families in these steel towns. Without a word of warning their life-time is cut. Most of them have just been able to get on the payroll. Many have just started families, and the first children have just begun school. They have just recently dared to buy furniture and a car on credit. They have just begun to dream about their first family vacation, about fixing their teeth. They most likely have just reached the first rung on the seniority list.

One can only imagine the profound shock they felt when, without warning, apologies or ceremony, a clerk walked up to the bulletin board in the steel mill and posted the notice: "The plant will be closed." The closing of the plants is only the opening act of a familiar and tragic drama on the stage of capitalism.

Even before the plants are closed—like vultures swooping down upon prey—the creditors, bankers, real estate operators, the furniture and car dealers, and the hired bill collectors have already begun their war on the lives of the steelworkers and their families. The courts will foreclose, the sheriffs will evict, the banks and businesses will repossess, and the marshals will garnishee any income that is left. It is a new emergency, a new crisis for tens of thousands of steelworkers and their families.

As a result of all this a new idea is gripping the minds of steelworkers. The concept of takeover, of nationalizing the steel mills, has become a popular idea. These steel towns stand as show cases of monopoly capitalism.

While all this is going on, President Carter and the senators and congressmen from the steel areas will protest what they allege to be a denial of human rights of workers in Magnitogorsk, Krakow and Prague, who are not only working but are living in complete security, happiness and with confidence in the future. This is because they are in the driver's

seat. They know that no steel mills will be closed and they will never be forced into unemployment. They are showcases of socialism.

The crisis of monopoly capital, and because of it the "crisis generation," is, of course, but one side of the story. It is the crisis side of reality. The other side is that you are also the generation of growing movements and struggles.

Yours is also the generation that is propelling the fighting rank-and-file movements in the shops, the Left-Center force in the trade unions.

Yours is the generation that sparked the rank-and-file challenge to the class collaborators in the steel union elections.

Yours is the affirmative action generation in the struggle against racism. This is a time when words—even good words, if they are not related to concrete actions, concrete measures—are not acceptable because in the context of today's reality they are an accommodation to racism.

Yours is the first generation that is witnessing the turning point when the most advanced of the socialist countries is overtaking and surpassing the most developed capitalist country.

Yours is the first generation when world war is not inevitable—the detente generation.

You will be the first to see the last of colonialism in the world.

You are the generation that will see the beginning of the process that will force the return of the Panama Canal to its rightful owners—the people of Panama. Our Party has worked for this from the day of our founding convention.

In balance, the objective processes of today present the most favorable situation for the activities and growth of the YWLL. How can anyone think of retiring, of throwing in the towel at any age when the objective processes, the direction of history and life itself are all our allies? I can understand why Rockefeller gave up politics—but not us.

The YWLL embodies the hopes and dreams for the "crisis generation."

In many ways yours is a most difficult task. You are working with young people who are just entering the world of struggle, the world of politics, who have not yet shed many of the illusions and falsehoods they have been surrounded with since childhood.

The task of leadership is **not** leadership in general, **not** leadership in words, but leadership that can move masses, that can light the path in struggle,

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

a leadership that can inspire the young people as they are—not in some other country, not 10 years from now, but as they are in the United States today. And, if we have learned anything, it is that in the development of political and ideological movements we can not skip stages.

Marxism-Leninism is a great liberating science. But only movements and people organized and led in struggle are liberators.

Marxism-Leninism must not be a shield between us and the masses. It should not set us apart from people.

To fight for the purity of Marxism-Leninism does not mean that we preserve it—vacuum pack it—and take it out every so often for some inner discussion. It is a social, political, ideological, movement and action-oriented science. It grows and develops in the give and take of movements and struggles. Marxism-Leninism that is not related to the task of leading people is not Marxism-Leninism. The choice is not between Marxism-Leninism or the policies and tactics of mass struggle. In fact they are inseparable.

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Marxism-Leninism is a revolutionary science because it is a science related to the leadership of masses.

Young people will join the YWLL mainly because of its program and demands relating to the concrete problems they face. It is a rare occasion indeed when someone will walk up and say, “Sign me up—I’m a Marxist-Leninist.” This means most will sign the membership application card mainly because they believe the YWLL is an effective fighter for reforms. Therefore, the inner-life of the YWLL should reflect this reality. Should you not make that initial step as easy and as interesting as possible? Are you less Marxist-Leninist because you permit and try to recruit young people to join the YWLL who are not Marxist-Leninist? Of course not! Mass work does not dilute one’s Marxism-Leninism. It enriches it. For those of you who are Communists and Marxist-Leninists the test of your Marxism-Leninism is to be able to lead an organization in which most likely the majority are not Marxist-Leninists.

To meet the challenge as a youth organization you have to simultaneously deal with serious problems while at the same time retaining a youthful, spirited and enthusiastic attitude toward life and struggles. You have to be able to creatively combine YWLL: A TRADITION CONTINUED

activities of a social, cultural and political nature. You should march on picketlines, but you should also know the latest dance steps. You should know the size of corporate profits, but you should also know the latest baseball scores. You have to speak and raise hell at mass demonstrations but you must also sing. Your club and branch meetings should be education and inspirational, but also light and lively.

Why should you develop the ability to do all these things? Because you are dealing with young people. But also because you are young. There’s an old Finnish saying about leaders in general, which does not discount youth leaders: “No one has ever inspired anyone with a sour puss.”

The YWLL is carrying high, proudly and with honor the banners and the 55-year history and tradition of Communist, of Marxist-Leninist-led youth organizations in the United States.

The Fourth National Convention is today adding a new chapter to this great tradition. You have a great Marxist-Leninist leadership. We in the Communist Party value very highly the comradely, fraternal relationships between our two organizations.

The YWLL has made many unique contributions in many areas of struggle. We are confident you will continue to make even greater contributions in the future. How could it be otherwise?

Attending this Convention makes one feel that the future of our class, our people and the Communist Party are in good hands.



A Milestone Convention

ROQUE RISTORUCCI

The draft program of the Communist Party, U.S.A. declares that youth represent "a vast anti-monopoly potential."

This assertion is substantiated by life, as youth form an increasingly influential part of the population, workforce and of the different social and nationality groups in the U.S. There are over 50 million people between the ages of 14 and 30 in the United States, comprising almost 25 per cent of the entire population. Moreover, workers under 25 account for 25 per cent of the labor force. Of these, 7 million are young industrial workers. Youth play a vital role, and are a significant part numerically in the Black liberation movement, Chicano, Puerto Rican and other nationally oppressed peoples' struggles. Similarly young women, a decisive section of the working class, play a major role in the struggle for women's equality. There are over 16 million high school students, and over 9 million students attend higher education, facing the vicious monopoly onslaught against public education and higher learning.

Clearly then, youth can be a decisive factor in the outcome of critical struggles for democracy, economic security, equality, peace, anti-monopoly transformations and socialism. Indeed, today, when the worse-than-depression conditions faced by millions of U.S. youth have become a critical problem affecting the lives of all working people, a mass, militant youth movement is indispensable to advancing the general struggle against monopoly.

It is in this context that the Fourth National Convention of the Young Workers Liberation League must be hailed. This was a convention which took giant strides towards the goal of winning and uniting the young generation against monopoly and overcoming the obstacles in the way of building a mass YWLL, the Marxist-Leninist led youth organization in the U.S. today, following in the tradition of the Young Workers League, Young Communist League and the Labor Youth League.

Three years ago in Philadelphia the YWLL set itself the task of building a League of mass youth

action. At that national convention it launched the campaign for youth's right to earn, learn and live, focusing on the right to a job and the introduction of a youth employment bill in Congress as a rallying point for youth unity and action.

The considerable achievements of the YWLL in implementing the policies and direction agreed upon at its previous convention were reflected in the attendance, composition, discussion and nature of its Fourth National Convention.

Over 800 delegates, alternates, observers and guests jammed the convention, held October 7-10. This was the largest YWLL convention to date, although it was its longest convention—four days—thus requiring a greater sacrifice from the participants, who represented over 31 states. The size of the convention reflected, in part, the over 75 per cent growth in YWLL membership since 1974. Dramatizing the substantial growth of the League in the last three years was the breakthrough made among high school students. While still not adequate, the participation of high school youth was by far the greatest ever—15 per cent of the youth attending the convention were high school students, many from Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, New York City.

The racial and national composition of the convention, which has been an outstanding feature of all League conventions, reflected this organization's unique contribution to the youth movement as the best fighter for the unity of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian, Asian and white youth. At the same time the convention took note of the urgency of intensifying the struggle against racism, and for the special demands of nationally and racially oppressed youth. Forty three per cent of the participants were nationally oppressed youth; 32 per cent were Black; 2 per cent Chicano; 4 per cent Puerto Rican; 1 per cent Native American Indian; 1 per cent Asian; and 4 per cent Latin American, other than Chicano or Puerto Rican.

Regarding class and social composition, the great bulk of the participants were working-class youth, either working, unemployed or from working-class

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families. About 45 per cent of the youth attending the convention were actually part of the labor force. Of these a significant part were industrial workers, and 12 per cent were unemployed. There were more college students present at this convention than at the previous convention, pointing to the modest growth of the League among this section of youth, and to a turn from sectarian attitudes towards non-working class youth, which have been a hindrance in the growth of the League since its founding almost eight years ago. Young women represented 46 per cent of the convention.

Most important, however, was the quality of the participation of these enthusiastic, creative youth. The program and agenda of the convention, which included a mass demonstration and a mass rally, did much to guarantee ample participation of the delegates and other youth present. The aim was to allow for the maximum of plenary discussion and especially workshop discussion on the part of all present.

Main Political Report Sets the Tone

The main political report by Comrade James Steele set a youthful, militant, yet serious tone to the convention.

The convention's focus on building a mass movement against the crisis conditions confronting youth was strongly placed from the outset. "Brothers and sisters," Steele commenced, "we have come to New York for one purpose and one purpose alone: to take the necessary steps to guarantee that the youth of our country do not enter the next decade the way they are leaving the present one—straddled with the yoke of discrimination, locked in the deepest recesses of the economic crisis like prisoners serving a life term in a dark, damp dungeon."

Steele demanded that President Carter declare the conditions of young America a disaster area, and call a special session of Congress to take emergency measures to remedy the situation, such as immediate youth jobs legislation, creating millions of jobs at union pay, passage of the Harrington youth employment act and the transfer amendment, which would free funds from the military budget for meeting the urgent social needs of the people.

A comprehensive national youth act, making youth's right to earn, learn and live an integral part of the "law of the land" is a fundamental proposition in the League's action program. Such an act would be the product of wide discussion among youth organizations; nevertheless, the YWLL en-

visages among the provisions the right to a job and job training, free public education from kindergarten through college, expansion of publicly-funded child care facilities, vast expansion of recreational and cultural facilities and opportunities for youth, and the right to hold public office at the age of 18. Furthermore, the principle of affirmative action is conceived as an essential feature that should permeate the entire national youth act, and is of special significance in relation to jobs and education.

The main action proposal contained in Steele's report highlighted this approach to the fight against racism and for youth rights. Stressing the need for maximum pressure to be exerted on the Carter Administration, Steele called upon youth of the U.S. to follow the example of the 1963 Civil Rights march for jobs and freedom on Washington, which forced the Kennedy Administration to stop stalling on civil rights, and which was instrumental in forcing Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., Steele urged youth to "let them hear our feet!"

Youth Unity Decisive

The fight for the unity of youth and their democratic organizations was seen as critical to the success of any programmatic demands and projects. This holds true for the success of the effort to bring together a broad U.S. delegation for the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students, to be held in Havana, Cuba, this coming summer, or for the mass petition campaign in support of the Harrington Bill, the fightback against the educational crisis and other decisions adopted by the convention.

The Draft Discussion Document for the Fourth National Convention, *A Better Life for the Young Generation*, characterized the united front approach as "a permanent way of working," and emphasized that the YWLL "must concentrate on mastering the united front style of work."

Comrade Steele added in his report that "the consistent fight for unity at every level is perhaps the most important and special contribution the League makes, in thought and action, to the mass education of our generation."

With this in mind, the proposal for a national youth act accented the need for wide discussion among different youth organizations and leaders, in order to ensure broad endorsement of this "bill of rights for youth," and to guarantee wide participation in the elaboration of the content and formulations of the act. This spirit of dialogue and youth

cooperation was reflected throughout Steele's speech. Thus he spoke of the "demands which will emerge *not only* from this convention but also from the exchange of ideas with other youth and student organizations and forces at every level." (Emphasis added.)

After citing the categorical needs of the youth movement and the general anti-monopoly movement for a "bigger, more influential Young Workers Liberation League," Steele called for the removal of the obstacles which stand in the way of rapid growth and development.

Undoubtedly the main achievement of the Fourth National Convention was its bold initiatives and powerful blows against sectarianism, not just in general, but in particular "the tendency to function like a general political organization or political party." This tendency had been criticized in the main document for the previous national convention of the YWLL, but given that convention's urgent task of unfolding a mass campaign around the specific economic and other problems facing youth, of which the organization was not fully convinced at that point, the convention was not able to concretely or sufficiently analyze and struggle against this phenomenon.

At this convention, report after report, speaker after speaker, workshop after workshop probed the manifestations and causes of this weakness. The YWLL did not hesitate to take steps to combat this problem, although the struggle against it was recognized as a difficult one, which could only be won if seen as a process. Sectarianism, and this particular manifestation of sectarianism, is a tenacious enemy, nurtured by objective difficulties, long established habits and routine, as well as certain features of youth, who once they have "seen the light" tend to be impatient with those who are still "backward."

The persistent nature of the ideological enemy is borne out by the fact that this was the same weakness that Georgi Dimitrov, in 1935, had attacked as the main roadblock in the work of the Young Communist Leagues.

Dimitrov said, "Our Communist Youth Unions in a number of capitalist countries are still mainly sectarian, detached from the mass organizations. Their fundamental weakness lies in the fact that they are still trying to copy the Communist Parties, their forms and methods of work, forgetting that the Komsomol [YCL] is not a youth Communist

Party. They do not sufficiently realize that this is an organization with its own particular tasks. Its methods and forms of work, of education and struggle should be adapted to *the concrete level and needs of youth.*" (Emphasis added.)

Steele emphasized that for a youth organization to play a mass role it must be basically different in character than a political party. (This in part accounts for the necessity of the *organizational* independence of the youth league, although politically and ideologically it is guided by the vanguard party of the working class.) The fundamental role of the YWLL is to educate young people through diverse forms of activity, including but not limited to mass political action and formal study, in the spirit of socialism. All facets of the organization must be conditioned by the reality that it is a youth organization, for and by youth. It must take into account the characteristics of youth, their interests, aspirations, needs and concerns. Anything of interest and concern to youth can not be alien to the League. Since its purpose is to influence, attract, recruit, educate and consolidate youth in its ranks, the YWLL's criteria for membership, level and pace of activity, discipline, forms of struggle and inner life must of necessity be different than that of a Communist Party. Comrade Steele's characterization of the YWLL as a "mass school of struggle" with an "open admissions policy" was a compelling argument for taking decisive steps to remove all barriers preventing honest and sincere youth from joining the YWLL.

A Convention of Action

The success of the Fourth National Convention was possible because it was a convention of action. It highlighted the need for emergency action for jobs and other pressing needs of youth through a militant mass demonstration and rally in the middle of New York City, youth unemployment capital of the world. It talked about the need for more attention to the cultural field and the artistic talents of youth, and most significantly it integrated cultural activities such as film showings, art exhibits and a rich cultural program at its mass rally throughout the entire convention.

Similarly with the problem of working like a youth Communist Party, the convention took corrective measures. The organization report by Jay Schaffner and the workshops on building a mass league and on Marxist-Leninist education and char-

acter building gave special attention to this problem.

Schaffner pinpointed the criteria for joining the YWLL. "The only basis for membership in the YWLL should be one's willingness to join in common struggle for a better life, a life with a future, a life that has meaning, a life that allows the full and creative development of one's youth."

The struggle for this concept of membership in the League is key to winning against sectarianism, which places impossibly high standards for youth to join the League or stay in the League.

The style of branch life, activities and atmosphere were studied and discussed as never before. Generally, this is where a youth comes in contact with the League. The branch is the main vehicle for the education of League members, the home room, so to speak, of the school of socialism. However, to join a branch, one must be able to find it. Much attention was given to the problem of an underground mentality affecting branches. A factor compounding this problem has been the general, city-wide character of too many of the branches. Comrade Schaffner stressed the need for rooting branches where young people live, play, work and study, "not in general, in, say, New York City, but in the communities. . . . in specific blocks. This is where youth live, this is where youth will come to us."

Another decisive step taken by this convention to build a more youthful style to change of the name of the highest political body from "central committee" to "national council." On the surface this may not seem very important, but in life it can aid immensely in developing a pace of work more in tune with the needs of youth. Again, it was considered that the name "central committee" tended to associate the YWLL with political parties and therefore created a pressure for the meetings of the highest national body of the YWLL to copy those of the Communist Party, to deal with all the problems of the world, thereby often putting excessive pressure on the members in this body and hampering their development. It was also decided to reserve five slots on the new national council for high school students. There have never before been so many high school students on the leading body. This will guarantee more attention to this vital section of

youth.

Never in the history of the YWLL have high school youth had such a dramatic presence as they had at this recently concluded convention. Some alumni of the YWLL and previous Marxist youth organizations who were guests at the convention agreed that the question of work among high school youth received a much more extensive and serious treatment at this convention than it had at any other progressive youth convention in the last 25 years.

An Impressive Convention

The Fourth National Convention was impressive in many ways. It won visas for many international delegates, including a delegation from the Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union. Its internationalist character, and the speeches of the international delegates, were profound. Many commented that they had never attended a convention in which the cultural aspect had been so thoroughly woven into the entire fabric of the event. The attention given to the problems of young workers, and in particular those hit by the recent layoffs, and the proposals advanced to build a victorious mass movement for youth employment legislation were also exciting features of the convention. However, this article has stressed the struggle against sectarianism, reflected most acutely in the tendency to act as a young Communist Party, because the convention correctly singled that task as the key to advancing on all fronts.

What is done in the next three years to fully put into life the deliberations and decisions of the Fourth National Convention will in effect render a judgement on the success of the convention. Yet, the YWLL's eager acceptance of its historic responsibility is both a source of confidence and inspiration. Now it is the responsibility of all democratic-minded people, progressives and Communists, in the trade unions, community organizations, and universities to do their utmost to aid in building and supporting a broad anti-monopoly youth movement, capable of winning major victories for youth. No greater contribution can be made toward this goal than the rendering of all-sided solidarity to the YWLL.

The Crisis in Steel

RICK NAGIN

Steelworkers and their families are facing drastic conditions in numerous cities around the U.S. as the steel industry carries through a wave of closing and scrapping of major production facilities. For example, by the end of November 5,000 workers were laid off by Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company as it closed most of its operations in the Youngstown, Ohio, area. A dark prospect confronts these workers and the entire Mahoning Valley. Official studies estimate that between 11,000 and 14,000 other workers will lose jobs because of the repercussions of this shutdown and that the city of Youngstown may lose 44,000 people—nearly one-third of its population. The mill towns of Campbell and Struthers may really become ghost towns.

Many explanations have been offered for this serious situation. For months, the industry has conducted a massive propaganda drive presenting its side. According to *The Yield*, house organ for the Sheet and Tube Company, “foreign imports, Governmental price restraint and mounting environmental regulations brought about the circumstances [which forced this major cutback].”

On the other hand, the Ohio Public Interest Campaign (OPIC)—a Nader-related organization—released a study in October charging Lykes Corp.—the New Orleans-based conglomerate owner of Sheet and Tube—with irresponsible mismanagement, failure to modernize and a predatory policy of milking the Youngstown operations to pay bank debts and for other projects of the conglomerate.

Neither of these explanations gets to the root of the problem. This is not an isolated shutdown. The entire U.S. steel and other metals industries are in deep crisis, with major shutdowns of steel and copper facilities in California, Arizona, the Buffalo area, Johnstown, and Eastern Pennsylvania.

But it is not even restricted to the United States. The same thing is happening throughout the capitalist world. At the end of October three Italian steel companies simultaneously laid off some 10,000 workers, and throughout the year Western Europe has been the scene of sharp clashes as work-

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ers have repeatedly struck and demonstrated against company efforts to shut down mills.

It is therefore ridiculous and chauvinistic for the American steel industry to portray itself as a helpless victim of powerful foreign companies.

On the other hand, the “mismanagement” theory put forth by OPIC in the case of one plant obviously also does not account for the extent of the crisis.

What then is the real reason for the crisis? The clearest explanation has come from perhaps an unexpected source—*The Wall Street Journal*. As stated in a lead article of Oct. 3 (“Factory Layoffs Spread Beyond Steel Industry”):

In the current layoffs, the steel and copper industries have been hit especially hard, basically because of a world-wide surplus of production capacity for the metals. Production facilities abroad have expanded, many nations’ economies have been sluggish, and U.S. demand isn’t booming. (Emphasis added.)

With one defect this explanation is fully consistent with the Marxist theory of capitalist crises of overproduction. The defect, of course, is that the crisis and the surplus production capacity are not “world-wide,” but restricted to the developed capitalist countries—a minority portion of the world.

Steel production in socialist and “third world” countries continues to grow uninterruptedly. The Soviet Union—far and away the world’s largest steel producing country—each year sets new production records as it has for the past 25 years. This is accompanied by steady expansion of plants, modernization and no layoffs.

Over the current year the U.S. steel industry has operated at slightly above three-fourths capacity and comparable figures apply to the other capitalist nations. In these countries the steel industries are now going through what U.S. Steel Chairman Edgar Speer has called a “shake-out.” Weaker companies (e.g. Alan Wood Steel) are being forced under and all companies are closing out older, less efficient departments and plants. Their aim is to

solve the crisis of overproduction at the expense of the workers through massive layoffs and intensified exploitation—speedup, job combinations, discipline—for those who remain on the job.

How did the problem of excess capacity arise? From 1971 to 1973 the steel industries of the capitalist world experienced a boom. There was a steel shortage. The companies jacked their prices sky-high and profits broke every record.

Each company acted although the sky was the limit and major expansion projects were launched. In an extensive report on Bethlehem Steel Corp., which has now reduced overall steelmaking capacity by 10 per cent and laid off 7,500 workers, the *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 10, quoted John Briggs, the company's vice president for planning. "There is no question," he said, recalling 1973 expansion decisions, "that we got carried away with the euphoria of the early 1970's."

This "euphoric," unplanned, chaotic, or better, "demented" expansion of the early 1970's has led to the current crisis. The dreams of unlimited profits were shattered when it suddenly appeared that every company was harboring the same dreams.

The market, however, was unmoved by the fervent expectations of all the steel monopolists. Instead of expanding, it had the nerve to shrink!

This seems anomalous considering that the capitalist world is in a "recovery" phase after the deep depression of 1975. The steel industry, however, is on the skids and serious concerns have been voiced that the repercussions of the steel crisis may be far-reaching.

There are important reasons why the steel industry has been especially hard hit, and why it has gone into crisis while other industries are recovering somewhat. In fact, the steel industry has not only confronted the market with excess capacity, it has pursued policies which greatly aggravate the situation and cause the market to tend to shrink.

Chief among these has been the industry's wild, unrestrained price policies. The companies have skyrocketed their prices over 125 per cent in the past decade. This is 50 per cent higher than the overall rate of inflation, which has been outrageous enough. The steel and energy industries are setting the pace in the disastrous campaign to drive down living standards and impose the "austerity" decreed by the Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission.

According to a special report prepared last

summer by the New York brokerage firm, Drexel Burnham Lambert, Inc., ("The Case of the Missing Ten Million Tons," by David Healy, July 18, 1977) steel consumption now would be ten million tons higher each year if it were not for the industry price increases since 1974 alone.

Despite the disastrous effects on workers, the captains of the steel industry continue to chart the same destructive course. "I don't know why they don't just let us raise prices 20 per cent," Jennings R. Lambeth, president of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, complained in an interview in the *American Metal Market* newspaper of Oct. 10, just a few weeks after announcing the coming shutdown. Lambeth was complaining that the Justice Department is currently investigating the steel industry's pricing policies.

The U.S. industry has definitely priced itself out of world markets and increasingly domestic consumers are switching to other materials or using less steel (e.g. smaller, lighter cars).

The U.S. companies have led the pack throughout the world on this question and this is the main reason they are screaming about imports. Imports are a real brake on the wild price increases of U.S. companies.

This is one reason controls over imports, either in the form of quotas or tariffs, would actually cost steelworkers jobs in this country, since the companies would simply price themselves out of the market even faster. The companies might continue to reap big profits by selling less steel at a higher price, but the results for the workers would be further disaster.

Import controls would also certainly lead to retaliation by foreign countries, which could end up costing U.S. steelworkers their jobs through reduction in exports of steel and steel products.

Steelworkers in every major capitalist country are catching hell and need the maximum unity against their common enemies—the big steel monopolies. The "foreign imports" campaign is carefully calculated among other things to prevent such unity from emerging.

Contrary to the impression created by the media, imports are no higher this year than they have been for the past 10 years. Since 1967 they have fluctuated between a low of 11.9 per cent (1973) and a high of 17.4 per cent (1971) averaging 14.2 per cent of the domestic market during this period. For the first eight months of 1977 imports accounted for 15.6 per cent of the domestic market (all figures

from American Iron and Steel Institute).

There has been no flood of imports, but every ton imported this year has been the occasion for a flood of press releases from the AISI, all of which have been dutifully reprinted in the press.

The import campaign has served as a convenient smokescreen behind which the industry hopes to get away with its outrageous attacks on the workers and the steel communities.

The industry showed its hand when U.S. Steel Chairman Edgar Speer stated, to many people's surprise, on Oct. 13 that he was not in favor of import quotas. Naturally, even in restricted quantities lower prices on foreign steel present a threat to the U.S. companies price rip-off plans. Instead of quotas Speer wants enforcement of "anti-dumping" laws, which would let foreign steel in but only at higher prices—i.e. the prices set by U.S. Steel.

This is what the industry means when it says it is not against free competition, just "unfair" competition. It is a graphic commentary on the U.S. steel industry that Japanese companies, which must import all raw materials, pay comparable labor costs and ship their steel across the Pacific are able to sell their products below U.S. prices and *still make a profit*. But then, as Speer admitted in a press conference at the AISI meetings last May, Japanese and Western European steel companies operate at rates of profit which are "unacceptably low" for U.S. companies.

Mr. Speer implores our sympathy or at least our cooperation and he threatens to shut down every steel town in the U.S. until he gets it.

While prices are a large part of the picture, they are not the only reason the market for U.S. steel is unnecessarily limited. There is, after all, a tremendous need for steel. U.S. cities are desperately in need of being rebuilt. We need massive construction of housing, schools, hospitals, public transportation systems, all of which would use huge quantities of steel.

The funds for such programs are certainly available in the huge federal budget, but they are tied up in wasteful, overpriced and dangerous military projects, which incidentally use little steel, besides threatening mankind with extinction. In fact, less than two per cent of U.S. steel production goes into ordnance and other military items.

Other federal policies also limit the market for steel. Most important are government policies

against trade with socialist and "third world" nations—the fastest growing markets for steel in the world. The Soviet Union offered the U.S. steel industry the opportunity to provide all the pipe for the development of natural gas in Siberia. This "North Star Project" would have involved millions of tons of steel. But cold war forces prevailed and the U.S. government rejected the offer. This did not hurt the Soviet Union, which simply turned to other capitalist countries and its own industry for the pipe. But it cost the U.S. working class thousands of jobs.

Similar futile attempts to thwart the development of "third world" countries have prevented large scale loans from the World Bank to finance purchases of steel and steel products.

The developing countries have emerged on the world steel scene. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have built steel mills in India, Egypt, Cuba and other countries. The threat of such aid from socialist countries has compelled the U.S. also to assist steel mill construction in the "third world," which now accounts for 21 per cent of world steel production. The growth of steel production in these formerly colonial areas has also limited the traditional markets of U.S. steel.

Although deeply shocked and still somewhat confused by the heavy blows and lying propaganda of the steel companies, the steelworkers and steel communities have begun to rally their forces and fight back. Most significant have been the dramatic actions taken by the union's District 31 conference Oct. 14 in Chicago. One thousand delegates at the conference unanimously adopted a resolution rejecting the industry's anti-import campaign and calling on the federal government "to launch a program to roll back steel prices and rebuild our decaying cities so as to provide jobs."

District 31 Director Jim Balanoff, in his keynote speech, lashed out sharply at the steel corporations for placing the burden of the crisis on the backs of the steelworkers and demanded instead that jobs be created by a shorter work week with no cut in pay. "There is nothing sacred about the eight hour day or the forty hour week," he said.

Similar programs have been voiced repeatedly by the rank-and-file movement in publications like *Labor Today* and *National Steelworkers Rank-and-File Committee Report* and at recent district-wide rank-and-file steelworker meetings held in Cleveland, Youngstown, Buffalo and Gary. These

ideas are increasingly being expressed by local union officials, especially in hard hit areas like Youngstown.

USWA President Lloyd McBride has taken the unprecedented step of calling a special meeting of the union's Basic Steel Industry Conference for Dec. 2. This body of 400 basic steel local union presidents is normally convened only to approve new contracts. McBride hopes to whip the union in line behind the anti-import campaign. But it is obvious that many coming to the meeting will have other ideas and a terrific battle is expected.

The membership in basic steel is deeply alienated from McBride's policies of collaborating with the companies on their every wish. Although the victor in last February's still-contested election, McBride lost, even in the official vote, to the reform Sadlowski-Montgomery slate in the basic steel section of the union.

Both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* voiced fears Oct. 21 that the current crisis may wreck what the *Journal* referred to as the "celebrated steel-labor romance." The main offspring of this love affair have been the 1971 productivity agreement, which sanctioned company programs to speed up workers and eliminate jobs, and the notorious no-strike "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" of 1974 and 1977 (renewed for 1980).

At the last Basic Steel Industry Conference in April, McBride faced a storm of protest against the inadequate 1977 steel contract. The presidents actually voted the contract down and it was only through considerable arm-twisting and a roll-call that the vote was eventually reversed.

Rank and file steelworkers and many local unions denounced these actions as illegal and demanded that the Basic Steel Industry Conference be reconvened and the contract reopened. Perhaps sensing the coming storm, the presidents of all locals at Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. refused to sign the contract.

Their worst fears have now come true, especially regarding McBride's claims that the contract was a historic step toward "lifetime job security." The few meager steps in this direction, won at the cost of important giveaways from previous contracts, now are being fought by the companies every step of the way.

The Youngstown presidents are reviving the call to reopen the contract, and to establish real lifetime security for all workers and indefinite unemploy-

ment and insurance benefits for anyone who is laid off.

Other demands, once considered "too radical," are also being openly discussed. A committee of local union and public officials in Youngstown has called for turning ownership of the plant over to the workers and the Youngstown community. This idea has the backing of numerous religious leaders, Ohio Sen. Howard Metzenbaum and Ron Daniels, a leader of the city's Black community and independent candidate for mayor in the recent election.

Unfortunately, most discussion centers on the idea of worker-community purchase of the plant. This is not realistic considering the huge sums—close to \$1 billion—needed to buy, modernize and operate the Youngstown steel operations. It would also place the burdens of competing in a capitalist economy on the workers. The company might truly welcome receiving a nice sum for shutting down the plant. This would not only allow Lykes Corp. to get away with their crime against the workers and people of Youngstown, but to be rewarded for it by their victims.

For these various reasons reactionary forces are also promoting the idea of worker purchase of failing plants—the so-called Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). According to Louisiana Sen. Russell Long, this approach to plant shutdowns and aging capitalism "is better than Geritol. It will increase productivity, improve labor relations, promote economic justice. It will save this economic system." (*Time Magazine*, Oct. 4, 1976, page 80.)

The reality is that only the federal government has the means to own and guarantee the operation of steel mills. This was shown during World War II when mills were built by the government, such as the Geneva Works in Provo, Utah, and the Kaiser Works in Fontana, Calif. After the war these plants were turned over to private industry at a 90 per cent discount.

The Communist Party has called for federal takeover of the Youngstown operations with democratic controls to insure a decisive voice for workers and community forces on the board of directors. Roscoe Proctor, Secretary of the Party's Labor Department, and this writer, speaking on behalf of the National Steel Commission and the Ohio Party District, issued this demand at a well publicized press conference Oct. 21 in Youngstown.

In addition, the Youngstown Party's Joe Dallet

Club has issued a widely distributed leaflet urging nationalization as the only immediate way of keeping the plants open, saving every job and saving the Mahoning Valley from disaster.

Earlier thousands of copies of the *Ohio Steelworker*, published by the Ohio Party's Steel Commission, were distributed in Youngstown, Steubenville, Cleveland and Lorain. This publication, eight pages of hard-hitting facts and figures on the steel crisis, exposed the lying nature of the industry's propaganda and offered a thorough-going program to end the crisis.

Together with Party literature, the pace of press distributions has increased. Plant gate distributors of the *Daily World* in Youngstown and other parts of the country are reporting numerous experiences of workers giving words of welcome and encouragement and often making financial contributions. One Youngstown steelworker, who had received the

paper on the morning shift, told distributors who had come to cover the afternoon shift, "I read that paper cover to cover and it made my day." The vice president of the local later came over and told the *Daily World* builders, "Everyone in the plant is reading your paper."

The steel crisis is arousing among many people serious questions about the capitalist system. The fact that unknown robber barons in New Orleans can threaten the life of an entire city in Ohio simply because it is in their direct interest to invest their capital elsewhere is exposing the insanity of capitalism as never before since the depression of the 1930s. The crisis is making it easier for tens of thousands of residents of steel towns across the country to see that private ownership of basic industry is a dangerous anachronism and a threat to the people's well-being.

On Labor Political Action

PATRICK WILLIAMS

Serious forces in the labor movement are taking a new and searching look at labor's entire political action effort. This coincides with, and is a part of, the growing criticism of policies identified with AFL-CIO Pres. George Meany. Expressive of the probing questions being asked are these from John F. Henning, executive officer of the California Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO: "We had great hopes in November. What happened? How is it that the conservatives are exercising the same power in Washington today that they did in the regime of Jimmy Carter's predecessor?"

Here are some of Henning's thoughtful conclusions: "I think, in 1977, we have seen the futility of giving unqualified faith to the Democratic Party as an instrument of social change and social progress . . . Corporate America today has more influence on the Democratic Party than the trade union body, than the Blacks, the Browns, the consumers, the environmentalists, and all the other social-oriented bodies of American life. They [the corporations] run the party. . ."

Another keenly dissatisfied labor leader is Pres.

Patrick Williams is a life-long trade unionist and recently retired president of a West Coast local union.

Al Gropiron of the AFL-CIO Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers. "We cannot depend on political parties and we shouldn't tie ourselves to either party in this country," he told his union's convention in August. "We have to make our programs and take our positions within the labor movement." These comments "drew whoops and hollers" of approval from hundreds of rank-and-file OCAW delegates, it was reported (*People's World*, Aug. 20, 1977).

The comments of Henning and Gropiron reflect the developing self-critical examination of political action methodology within labor's ranks. Not everyone draws advanced conclusions regarding the need for political independence, but the need to do something different has become embarrassingly clear.

These shifting views are a product of objective conditions. In a world of shrinking opportunities for U.S. imperialism, Big Business is cracking down on the workers and on the workers' organizations. Cozy relationships with employers aren't so cozy any more. Nor are cozy relationships with politicians any longer productive of the nickel-and-dime legislative "victories" that for so long sustained illusions about the effectiveness of labor political

action.

Instead of nickel-and-dime gains, labor is getting clobbered with serious defeats, both in Washington, D.C. and in the state capitols. No wonder leaders like Henning are asking: "What happened?"

In this climate, the rapid development of Left-Center unity for independent labor political action is both possible and essential. Unity in the political arena will greatly speed the process of rebuilding overall organic unity of the entire trade union movement, so that labor can confront its enemies with its full united strength.

The basis for Left-Center unity is the *more advanced* among the positions of the Center forces. In their desire to build unity, the Left forces can not lose sight of this. Center trade unionists will typically have mixed positions—progressive on some issues, backward on others. The Left is concerned with building unity on those issues that challenge the power of the class enemy—those issues that isolate the worst collaborationists on the Right.

Correct Left-Center political action unity can only be built on a class-struggle basis. This is because every significant political need of the workers must be paid for out of employer profits and will be resisted with fang and claw by corporation lobbyists, the mass media and the entire monopoly engine of political pressure.

This monopoly engine is high-octane and geared up to steamroller workers. It behooves labor to organize its primary source of power, the rank-and-file membership, to fight back. Left-Center unity, expressed in a thousand forms, is the answer.

While there are no blueprints, in general, Left-Center political action unity will be built around issues and demands that both the Left and the Center agree are vital. These issues and demands will vary widely from one union to another and from one area to another. They will shift as time goes on, tending to become more basic and far-reaching as the crisis sharpens and the corporation crackdown toughens.

Within this complex process, a central question is the fight for shorter hours with no reduction in take-home pay. The persistence and severity of mass unemployment, its savage racist edge, expressed in jobless rates of 50 to 75 per cent for ghetto youth, coupled with growing pressure from rank-and-file movements for "jobs, not promises" have generated recognition among important Center

forces that a cut in hours is the only way to create millions of urgently needed jobs in the private sector.

Within individual unions, Left-Center unity will take shape around a bargaining demand for shorter hours in the specific form (six-hour day or 32-hour week, for example) that fits the industry. Within the labor movement as a whole and among unorganized workers as well, Left-Center unity can be built around a campaign in Congress for enactment of the Conyers 35-hour bill, or something substantially like it.

An important organized expression of Left-Center unity in the fight for shorter hours is the new All Unions' Committee to Shorten the Work Week, launched October 25 at a meeting in Detroit of local union leaders representing 200,000 industrial workers. In declaring that the fight for shorter hours is imperative and long overdue, and in proposing concrete steps to organize that fight, these union leaders objectively separated themselves from the do-nothing lip-service of those in labor who are more comfortable playing footsie with the boss than leading a fight.

The Left forces in labor—the Communists, the Left Socialists, the militant advocates of class unity and international solidarity, the proponents of rank-and-file organization, the fighters against racism and anti-Communism, the toughest class conscious shop cadres—confront no more critical task at this moment than to give leadership in building the broadest possible unity around the shorter hours issue. Serious attention to this everywhere will help speed the creation of a network of hundreds of action committees across the nation, the modern equivalents of the historic Eight-Hour Leagues of yesteryear. Such a level of organization can bring increasingly irresistible pressure on Congress to act, while at the same time creating the climate for the strongest unions—Steel and Auto, for example—to take on the economic struggle for a shorter hours breakthrough in the basic industries.

A serious, sustained campaign for millions of new jobs through shorter hours will help forge labor unity in two respects: It will advance the cause of uniting all U.S. unions within a single federation on a class-struggle basis because both independent and AFL-CIO unions have the same objective need for shorter hours. At the same time, such a campaign will undercut racism and sexism because it

addresses the most urgent need of all workers, and especially of Black and other oppressed workers, young workers and women workers—that is, enough jobs so that workers do not need to compete with one another to feed their families.

Urgent as it is, shorter hours is but one of many issues around which Left-Center unity can be built. Unity with Center forces should not be spurned because they may have backward positions and hang-ups on one or more questions. The single crucial test is: Does the issue or demand meet worker needs at expense of employer profits? If the answer is “Yes,” a Left-Center coalition can be built around the issue or issues in question, and this unity will lead to victories. Such victories will have a strong educative impact, raising the political level of the Center forces—and teaching the Left forces valuable lessons as well.

An example of such an issue is job health and safety. Significantly, it was around Carter’s efforts to sap the OSHA program that Gropiron launched his bitter attack on the two corporation-dominated parties. And experience at the 1977 Washington State legislature showed that initiative taken by Left union leadership to get additional funds appropriated for safety inspectors and industrial hygienists aroused broad and militant support and led to one of the few labor victories in a session marked by bitter setbacks.

Political action of this kind, undertaken by a coalition of Left and Center forces—even when undertaken within the old party primaries as well as outside—will by definition be independent political action. Any time you organize rank-and-file action and pressure to win workers’ political demands, at the expense of the employers, you’re taking on the Democratic and Republican Parties. If you don’t think so, try it and see.

It follows that the conscious building of Left-Center coalitions in the political arena is an immediately practical and urgent stage in preparing for

the eventual emergence of a labor-based broad new political party.

The active participation by the Center will bring millions of workers under their leadership into the arena of struggle on issues in an independent way. The active participation of the Left, especially the Communists, will keep the alliance pointed at the enemy, and will guarantee that the emerging new party will have a wholesome position on racism and anti-Communism, the critical ideological questions.

The massive rank-and-file participation needed to win meaningful labor political victories will train cadres for the new party. In the process of mounting campaigns around issues, the question of bona fide labor candidates for Congress and the legislatures will come to the fore naturally everywhere and demand to be dealt with.

Henning of the California AFL-CIO expresses confidence in labor’s power to overcome its political impotence. “We can break the political power of corporate America,” he says. But not through “the traditional means.” Instead, what is needed is a labor-initiated massive new coalition. “If we can link them all together—the minority community, the consumer community, the environmental community—we can have within ourselves the sinews of success, the sinews of political progress. . . . Without that alliance, there is nothing to suggest that we can ever move from where we are today.”

Such a broad, labor-initiated coalition can flesh out the ranks of the independent political movement and give it the rounded program that can eventually win political power.

In summary, the conscious building of Left-Center political coalitions on a host of issues at many different levels throughout the entire trade union movement is a vital aspect of the campaign to unite labor on a class-struggle basis. It is also an indispensable precondition for the creation of a bona fide new mass people’s party.

Left Center Unity and the Fight for Jobs in Steel

HERB KAYE

Recent developments in steel reflect some interesting aspects of the fight for Left-Center unity. Following the election of Lloyd McBride as International President of the United Steelworkers Union in May 1977, there were many in the upper echelons of the AFL-CIO and of the steel industry who confidently expected the disappearance of the rank-and-file movement in the USWA and a return to "normalcy."

However their illusions were shattered with the unprecedented rejection of the contract for basic steel on the first ballot by the local presidents. This was followed by votes for rejection in more than 50 basic steel locals representing more than half the membership in that division of the union.

As the economic crisis in the steel industry has intensified, the steel companies have opened up an all-out offensive to make the steelworkers pay to assure superprofits for the steel monopolists. Whole steel mills have been permanently closed, more than 20,000 workers were laid off in the month of October, harassment and firing of Blacks, Latinos and women has been intensified, and an all out propaganda campaign aimed at getting Congress to grant the industry numerous concessions and outright subsidies has been launched.

Against this background, the steelworkers have been struggling to maintain their jobs and living standards in spite of a union leadership bent on accommodating itself to the steel industry's policy of "Profits Above All."

The determined militancy of the steelworkers has found expression in the rank-and-file movement within the USW, which has grown in numbers, influence and experience in the course of the struggle.

The rank-and-file movement is a many-sided force that operates on different levels, involving elements of the Left who hold socialist views, are firm upholders of the workers' everyday interests, and conduct a principled fight against racism and red-baiting, and those of the Center who, while ready to fight the company as the enemy, have more limited

long range objectives.

The thread of common interest uniting these forces is a determination to bring about basic changes in the role and policies of the USW—from collaborating with the corporate enemy to taking the company on as the main cause of all problems.

This loose coalition of Left and Center forces began to emerge in the fight against the ENA (No Strike Clause) in the early 70's. It grew stronger in the campaigns supporting Ed Sadlowski for District 31 Director and later for President of the USW, and continued to play a key role in the 1977 contract fight, and now in the recent jobs crisis.

It has been due in large part to the active, dynamic role of this coalition, despite its functioning often in an uncoordinated fashion, that such changes as the breakthrough of electing a Black vice president to the International Executive Board of the USW were achieved.

The Left-Center coalition has also been a critical factor in these developments:

- The special demands of Black and Latino and women steelworkers have been projected by caucuses of these groups, which have raised their demands in so strong a manner that they can no longer be ignored.

- The October Conference of the 120,000 member District 31 in the Chicago-Gary area adopted a series of policy resolutions on the jobs crisis and related matters that sharply repudiated the company-oriented positions of the International leadership.

In the struggles around many vital issues, some Center forces, while taking good positions on issues, have tended to limit the scope of involvement of the rank and file.

The approach of the Left, exemplified at the recent District 31 Conference, is to appeal to the workers by circulating petitions in the mills against company layoffs, issuing thousands of copies of newsletters clarifying the real factors behind the layoffs, and winning the support of the major locals for resolutions calling for action to pressure

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companies to halt layoffs and preserve steelworkers' jobs.

The combination of this two-pronged effort, moving along class struggle lines on different levels but in the same general direction, registered important advances in the fight for jobs, full equality and trade union democracy at the District 31 Conference.

The Conference heard inspiring speeches from and gave warm receptions to such outstanding trade union leaders as Zola Zembe, Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, Frank Rosen, Director of District 11 of the United Electrical Workers, Addie Wyatt, Vice President of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union, and the strike leaders from the Minnesota Iron Range. More than \$1500 was turned over from the District to aid the strikers, who are now in the fourth month of their strike.

Resolutions adopted included a call for local unions to withdraw funds from banks doing business with South Africa; for peaceful desegregation of public schools; for establishment of a women's department of the International union; and for removal of the anti-Communist clause from the USW Constitution. Only a year ago, at the last District 31 Conference, this latter resolution was defeated after hot debate. This year the resolution passed unanimously.

The repudiation of the McBride policy of supporting the company's campaign for higher tariffs on steel, despite McBride's personal appeal to the Conference, was a challenge that the Right in the USW will not ignore or take lightly.

The Right has already been hurt by the growing repudiation of its backing of the ENA no strike clause, most recently by the 18,000 iron ore miners of Minnesota and Michigan. These youthful strikers overwhelmingly rejected a sellout offer involving wage cuts for 25 per cent of the workers which McBride tried to palm off on them after three months on the picket lines.

The Right forces in the Union's leadership still have wide resources at their disposal, however, and a conference of the local presidents of all Basic Steel locals has been called by McBride for Dec. 3 in Washington, D.C. to discuss the current steel crisis. Efforts will undoubtedly be made at this gathering to isolate and steamroller the District 31 locals and

others who oppose tailing the steel companies into going along with the drive for higher tariffs and lower taxes for the industry—all in the name of "saving steelworkers' jobs."

Working to build momentum for an anti-company policy, eight rank-and-file caucuses in the Calumet area, including the Black caucus, women's caucus and four local union presidents, called a Special Conference on the Crisis in Steel on Nov. 13 in Hammond, Ind. The Conference was attended by over 100 steelworkers, who discussed all angles of the job crisis and adopted resolutions stressing the need for job-producing projects and a shorter hour week.

But while moving to persuade and involve the rank and file in their local unions and shops on the nature of the crisis and what to do about it, the Left-Center coalition has thus far not extended its efforts to the people in the communities around and beyond the mills. Yet these people, workers in other industries, small shopkeepers, the unemployed and minorities, have a big stake in the fight for jobs in steel. The inflationary push of the steel corporations in jacking up steel prices 20-30 per cent a year has added tremendously to the higher cost of living for all Americans. To counteract the influence and power of the Steel Trust, which extends deep into all areas of city, state and federal government, the mass media, etc., the Left-Center coalition in steel will have to carry its fight beyond the mill gates and into the communities and legislative halls.

In this fight, the Communist Party, which played a major role in mobilizing the reserves of the working class to help in accomplishing the great job of organizing steel in the 'thirties, has an important contribution to make.

The warm reception given by steelworkers to the *Daily World* at the mill gates, and the interest in Party leaflets and statements, attest to the fact that our Party's policies and program are "on stream" in steel.

A mass Party in steel can be a vital aid to a broader and more effective Left-Center coalition. Experience in building sales and subs for our press among steelworkers indicate a readiness to respond where workers are invited to join the Communist Party.

There is an old saying that is truer than ever today: "As Steel Goes, So Goes the Nation."

The Great October Revolution and Human Progress

LEONID BREZHNEV

Sixty years ago, led by the Party of Lenin, the workers and peasants of Russia overthrew the power of the capitalists and landowners. That was the first victorious socialist revolution in world history.

Those unforgettable October days stirred the entire planet. A new epoch, the epoch of the world's revolutionary renewal, the epoch of transition to socialism and communism, was ushered in. It opened the road along which hundreds of millions of people are moving today and along which the whole of mankind is destined to move.

We were the first. We did not have an easy time. We had to hold out in a hostile encirclement. We had to break out of age-old backwardness. We had to surmount the enormous force of historical inertia and learn to live by new laws, by the laws of collectivism.

Today, when we assess the main result of six decades of struggle and work, we can say with pride: We have held our ground, we have stood fast and won.

We won in the stormy, anxious years of the Civil War and armed intervention, when it was a question of the life and death of the Soviet power.

We won in the fast-moving, teeming years of the first five-year plans, when it was a question of whether the workers and peasants of our country would be able to lay the foundations of socialism and convert the motherland into a great industrial power within the extremely short period allotted to them by history.

We won in the grim, flaming years of the Great Patriotic War, when it was a question of whether socialism would withstand the onslaught of world imperialism's shock forces and save mankind from fascist bondage.

We won in the difficult, tense postwar years. The ravaged economy was speedily restored and the advanced lines of economic, scientific and technical progress were reached, despite the cold war and nuclear blackmail.

The Soviet Union has been living in peace for

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more than thirty years. A developed socialist society, the result of the historic creative work of the masses, has been built, exists and is being perfected.

Comrades, every time we celebrate the anniversary of the October Revolution we perceive anew its significance and the force of its impact on the course of history, on the destiny of the world.

The October Revolution has, of course, solved, above all, the problems of our country, the problems posed by its history, by the concrete conditions obtaining in it. Basically, however, these were not local but general problems posed before the whole of mankind by social development. The epochal significance of the October Revolution lies precisely in the fact that it opened the road to the solution of these problems and thereby to the creation of a new type of civilization on earth.

The October Revolution proved that a radical change of society's political foundations was possible. The proletariat of Russia gave the answer to the most pressing, the most burning question of politics, namely, whether the exploiters' monopoly of power was eternal or could and should be replaced by the power of the working people.

The six decades of socialist construction are the most eloquent demonstration of what can be achieved by working people who have taken the political leadership of society into their own hands and assumed responsibility for their country's destiny. These decades have proved that there neither has been nor can be a road to socialism without the power of the working people, without socialist statehood.

The victory of the October Revolution gave the working people their first opportunity of putting an end to exploitation and tearing out of bondage to economic anarchy. This key problem of social progress was resolved through the abolition of private property and its replacement with public property. Anarchy of production gave way to scientific, planned economic management.

Within a short period of time, in terms of history, a huge backward country was turned into a state with a highly developed industry and collectivized agriculture. It now takes only two and a half

working days for our industry to produce as much as was produced in the whole of 1913. Today we produce more industrial goods than was produced in the whole world a quarter of a century ago. The gigantic economic growth of history's first socialist country is the result of emancipated labor, the result of the labor of people who are aware that they work for themselves, for the good of all.

The October Revolution and socialism have also enriched the history of mankind with experience of the spiritual emancipation of working people. One of the "secrets" of the rule of the oppressors has always been the reinforcement of direct physical oppression of the masses with spiritual oppression. The ruling classes did all they could to make access to education and culture difficult for the working people, to keep them captive to false ideas and concepts. That is why the cultural revolution was a natural continuation of the political revolution in our country.

Within the lifetime of a single generation, the Soviet Union delivered itself entirely and for good from the onerous burden of illiteracy. The working people began to be active in cultural life, becoming the creators of cultural values. A new, socialist intelligentsia, that brought the country glory with outstanding achievements in science, technology, literature and art, came from the midst of the people. A union that mankind's finest minds dreamed of, the historic union of labor and culture, has taken place. In the history of our country, in the history of world culture, this was a turn of immense significance.

Among the achievements of the October Revolution, a noteworthy place is held by the settlement of the national question, one of the most painful and dramatic questions in the history of human society.

In urging a militant alliance of the working people of all nations and ethnic groups, the Party and Lenin had always upheld the right of nations to self-determination, to complete and unconditional equality. The victory of the October Revolution was thus a victory in the struggle for national liberation. The peoples of former tsarist Russia got their first-ever possibility of making an historical choice, the right to determine their own destiny.

They made their choice. They united voluntarily in a powerful federal state and, relying on disinterested assistance from the Russian people, resolutely embarked upon a new life.

The strength of unity and mutual assistance bet-

ween nations gave unprecedented acceleration to the development of all the republics. Hostility and mistrust in the relations between nations gave way to friendship and mutual respect. Internationalism was firmly established where the mentality of national egotism had been implanted for ages. Mutually enriched national cultures, forming the integral Soviet socialist culture, shone forth with fresh, vivid colors.

The equality, fraternity and unbreakable unity of the peoples of the Soviet Union became a fact. A new historical community, the Soviet people, took shape. The mounting process of the drawing together of nations permeates every sphere of life in our society. Such, comrades, is the remarkable result of the Leninist national policy; such is our experience, whose epochal significance is indisputable.

The assertion of the principles of social equality and justice is one of the greatest achievements of the October Revolution. We have every right to say that no other society in the world has done or could have done as much for the masses, for the working people as has been done by socialism. Every Soviet citizen enjoys in full the rights and freedoms enabling him to participate actively in political life. Every Soviet citizen has the possibility of choosing a calling in life that conforms to his vocation and abilities and of being useful to his country and people.

The conditions under which Soviet people live and work are steadily improving. Soviet citizens do not know the humiliating sense of uncertainty of the morrow, the fear of being left without work, without medical care and without a roof over their heads. Society safeguards their rights and interests, and protects their civic and human dignity.

A new Constitution of the Soviet Union was adopted recently. It has reaffirmed that in our country the prime purpose of all transformations, of all changes is to provide every person with the conditions enabling him to live like a human being. It has given further convincing testimony that the concepts of human freedoms and rights, democracy and social justice receive a tangible content only under socialism.

Comrades, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution has brought our country and our people to the van of social progress. Today, sixty years later, we hold a worthy place in its most advanced positions: we have been the first in the world to build a developed socialist society and we are the

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

first to have embarked upon the building of communism. . . .

No event in world history has had such a profound and lasting effect on mankind as the Great October Socialist Revolution. The flashes of the October storm illumined the way into the future for the peoples of many countries. History began to advance literally in seven-league strides.

The most important of the international consequences of the October Revolution, which have shaped the face of the epoch, has been the emergence and development of the world socialist system. At one time, the bourgeoisie, terrified at the victory of the October Revolution and its powerful influence on the minds of millions, sought to uncover "the hand of Moscow" in every revolutionary event in the world. Nowadays, few people give credence to such fairy tales. Revolutions start and triumph by virtue of each country's internal development and of its people's will. The series of triumphant socialist revolutions in Europe, Asia and America signified a continuation of the ideas and cause of the October Revolution.

As a result, the practice of world socialism has been extended and enriched. Each of the countries that have taken the socialist road has in some respects in its own specific way dealt with the problems of socialist statehood, the development of socialist industry, the drawing of the peasantry into cooperatives, and the ideological re-education of the masses.

There is no doubt that the transition to socialism by other peoples and countries with different levels of development and national traditions will invest socialist construction with an even greater diversity of concrete forms. That is quite natural.

However, life provides confirmation that the general fundamental and inalienable features of the socialist revolution and socialist construction remain in force and apply everywhere. The sum total of experience in the development of world socialism provides convincing evidence, among other things, of the following:

Power continues to be the main issue in a revolution. It is either the power of the working class, acting in alliance with all the other working peoples, or the power of the bourgeoisie. There is no third possibility.

Transition to socialism is possible only if the working class and its allies, having gained real political power, use it to end the socio-economic

domination of the capitalists and other exploiters.

Socialism can win only if the working class and its vanguard, the Communists, are able to inspire and unite the masses of working people in the struggle to build a new society, and transform the economy and all social relations on socialist lines.

Socialism can consolidate its positions only if the working people's power is capable of defending the revolution against any attacks by the class enemy (and such attacks are inevitable, both internal and, most probably, external).

Those are only some of the lessons of the development of socialism today. They once again confirm the great international importance of the experience of the October Revolution, for all the specific conditions of our revolution. They once again confirm the great truth expressed by Lenin in these words: "It is the Russian model that reveals to all countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future" (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 22).

But world socialism also has experience of a different kind, which confirms that departures from the Marxist-Leninist course, departures from proletarian internationalism inevitably lead to setbacks and hard trials for the people.

It is well known what grave consequences have been brought about in China by attempts to ignore the economic laws of socialism, by the departure from friendship and solidarity with the socialist countries, and by alignment with the forces of reaction in the world arena. The Chinese people's socialist gains have been gravely endangered.

Some leaders in capitalist countries now obviously count on the present contradictions and estrangement between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries continuing for a long time and even growing more acute in the future. We think that this is a shortsighted policy. Those who pursue it may well miscalculate.

There is no point in trying to guess how Soviet-Chinese relations will shape up in the future. I would merely like to say that our repeated proposals to normalize them still hold good.

Comrades, the new relations that have been established—thanks to the fraternal parties' internationalist policy—among the socialist countries, above all among the countries of the socialist community, are a great contribution to the life of the contemporary world by the world socialist

system.

We can say with a clear conscience: our alliance, our friendship and our cooperation are the alliance, friendship and cooperation of sovereign and equal states united by common purposes and interests and held together by bonds of comradely solidarity and mutual assistance. We have been advancing together, helping one another and pooling our efforts, knowledge and resources to advance as rapidly as possible.

We have taken the line of jointly tackling the problems of raw materials, fuel and energy, food and transport. We have been deepening our specialization and cooperation, especially in engineering, on the basis of the latest scientific and technical advances. We intend to solve these problems reliably, economically and for a long term. We intend to solve them with due consideration for the interests and needs of each fraternal country and the community as a whole.

In the distant days of the 1917 October Revolution, the workers and peasants of Russia came out alone against the old world, the world of greed, oppression and violence. They built socialism in a country surrounded by hostile forces of imperialism. They built and defended it successfully. Today we are not alone. Our country has become part of a great family of socialist states. Can we Soviet Communists and all the other Soviet people cherish anything more in the world around us than this socialist family? For its prosperity, for our common well-being we have been doing everything we possibly can!

It is hard to overestimate the tremendous influence that our October Revolution exerted on the development of the national liberation movement.

It was the victory of the October Revolution that truly awakened the political consciousness of the colonial peoples and helped them to score tremendous successes in fighting for liberation from oppression by imperialism. As early as 1919, Lenin wrote that "the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 153-154).

Since the Second World War, since our victory over fascism, more than 2,000 million peoples have thrown off the yoke of the colonialists and have risen to independent statehood. The colonial system of imperialism in its classical forms can, on the whole, be regarded as having been dismantled. That, comrades, is an epoch-making development.

It is of exceptional importance that many of the

countries that have achieved liberation reject the capitalist road of development and have set themselves the goal of building a society free from exploitation, and have adopted a socialist orientation.

The socialist countries are staunch and reliable friends of these countries, and are prepared to give them utmost assistance and support in their development along the progressive path. This means not only moral and political, but also economic and organizational support, including assistance in strengthening their defenses.

The fighters for freedom have no easy way before them. They have to work hard to lay the foundations of the public economy required for socialism. Fierce battles with the exploiter elements and their foreign patrons are inevitable. Now and again these result in zigzags in the policies of the young states and sometimes even lead to retreats. But the overall trend of development is incontestable. The will of millions of working people who have become aware of their goals and their place in life is a sure guarantee that national independence will be strengthened and that the social system free from exploitation and oppression will ultimately be victorious.

None of this means, of course, that imperialism has reconciled itself with such a course of development. No, indeed, for its positions in the former colonies are at times still quite strong, and the imperialists are doing everything to try and retain these, and to deepen and extend them wherever possible.

It is no longer a simple matter for them to decide on direct armed intervention in the affairs of the countries that have freed themselves. The latest major act of this kind—the U.S. war against the people of Vietnam—ended in a defeat that was too crushing and ignominious to encourage a repetition of such gambles.

There is growing resistance to the attempts to involve the young states in imperialist military blocs, and the non-alignment movement is one piece of evidence of this.

It is likewise doubtful whether imperialism will be helped by the efforts to use the reactionary regimes it has set up or suborned in former colonies. After all, these regimes can not offer the peoples anything but new forms of dependence on the same old imperialism.

The victory of the October Revolution ushered in a new stage in the struggle of the international working-class movement.

The building of socialism in the USSR, and then

in other countries, helped to foster the political maturity of the proletariat in the capitalist countries. Its ranks became more organized. There arose a force destined to play a great role in history—the international Communist movement. The front of the proletariat's allies in the struggle against monopoly domination, for democracy and socialism, grew broader.

Meanwhile, capitalism is ever more clearly showing that it is a society without a future. Its economy is afflicted by chronic fever. Technological progress is pushing masses of workers out of the factories on a scale that threatens to shake the entire socio-political system. Prices are rising continually, and inflation remains the cardinal problem. Shocking exposures of unsavory political manipulations, corruption, abuse of power, and flagrant transgressions of the law by leaders at the highest level explode like bombshells first in one country and then in another, demonstrating the degradation of the ruling class. A record crime rate completes the picture. All this signifies that the objective economic and socio-political preconditions for the transition to socialism have attained a high degree of maturity. The desire of the masses in the capitalist countries for radical changes is mounting.

Of course, the bourgeoisie is an experienced adversary. It changes its tactics, and it maneuvers. It has recourse to partial reforms in an effort to bolster up its positions and blunt the gravitation of the masses towards socialism.

In this situation the Communist Parties are working to perfect the strategy and tactics of their revolutionary struggle. They are striving to rally all the democratic forces against domination by the monopolies. Their theoretical guidelines in this context contain interesting points, although probably not everything can be regarded as finalized and incontrovertible. This is understandable: a quest is a quest. What is important is that it should proceed in the right direction.

Whatever routes may be chosen, the ultimate mission of the Communists is to lead the masses to the principal goal, to socialism. The experience of the struggle for the victory of the October Revolution has shown that changes of tactics, compromises in order to win new allies, are quite possible in revolutionary practice. But we have also become convinced of something else: under no circumstances may principles be sacrificed for the sake of a tactical advantage. Otherwise, as they say,

you'll keep the hair, but lose your head.

The greater the influence of the Communist Parties, the more vigorously imperialism tries to divert the Communists from the correct path. This is done both crudely—by pressure and threats—and more subtly. At times the Communists in bourgeois countries are now promised that their “right to a place in society” will be “recognized.” A mere “trifle” is demanded in exchange: that they give up fighting the power of capital, for socialism, and abandon international class solidarity. But the Communists won a place for themselves in society long ago. They won it precisely by their revolutionary struggle. Their role in society is recognized by the peoples, and no one can deprive them of it!

The imperialists would very much like to undermine the solidarity of the Communist ranks. That is why, for example, the falsehood is persistently being spread that the Communist Parties in the socialist countries—and, especially, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—are imposing upon the Communists in the West their prescriptions for the socialist transformation of society. But this is an obvious fabrication.

Our Party, like all the other Marxist-Leninist parties, firmly adheres to the principles generally accepted in the Communist movement: equality, independence, non-interference in internal affairs, solidarity, and mutual support among the Communists of different countries.

Today, as we mark the sixtieth anniversary of our Revolution, we Communists of the Soviet Union declare once again that we will always be loyal to the great brotherhood of the Communists of the world! We warmly wish the Communist and Workers' Parties, and their allies, fighting against the dictatorship of capital, for freedom, peace and social progress, every success. You can always rely on our friendship, solidarity and support!

Comrades, the Soviet government was born under the sign of Lenin's Decree on Peace, and ever since then our country's foreign policy has been one of peace. Objective historical conditions have dictated its concrete content: peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

In our day the principles of peaceful coexistence have taken fairly firm root in international affairs as the only realistic and reasonable principles. This is a result of the changed correlation of forces in the world—above all, of the increased might and international prestige of the Soviet Union and the entire

socialist community. It is also a result of the successes of the international working-class movement and the forces of national liberation. It is, finally, a result of the acceptance of the new realities by a definite segment of the ruling circles in the capitalist world.

At the same time, it is a result of the tremendous work done in recent years by the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community to reorient international relations towards peace.

The salutary changes in the world, which have become especially appreciable in the 1970s, have been called international detente. These changes are tangible and concrete. They consist in recognizing and enacting in international documents a kind of code of rules for honest and fair relations between countries, which erects a legal and moral-political barrier to those given to military gambles. They consist in achieving the first—if only modest, for the present—understandings blocking some of the channels of the arms race. They consist of a ramified network of agreements covering many areas of peaceful cooperation between states with different social systems.

The changes for the better are most conspicuous in Europe, where good-neighborly relations, mutual understanding and the mutual interest of the nations and their respect for one another are gaining in strength. We highly appreciate this achievement, and consider it to be our duty to safeguard and consolidate it in every way. Therefore, we attach great significance to cooperation with such countries as France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain and Italy—with the European states, big and small, belonging to a different social system.

It is natural, too, that we attach great significance to relations with the United States. There is much that divides our countries—from the socio-economic system to ideology. Not everyone in the United States likes our way of doing things, and we too could say a great deal about what is going on in America. But if differences are accentuated, if attempts are made to lecture each other, the result will only be a build-up of distrust and hostility, useless to our two countries and dangerous to the world as a whole. At the very inception of the Soviet state Lenin made it clear to the American leaders of the time that “whether they like it or not, Soviet Russia is a great power” and “America has nothing to gain from the Wilsonian policy of piously refusing to

deal with us on the grounds that our government is distasteful to them” (*Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. XXX-VII, p. 254, in Russian). This was true half a century ago. It is all the more true today.

Life itself requires that considerations of a long-term character, prompted by a concern for peace, be decisive in Soviet-American relations. This is the course we follow, and this is what we expect in return. There is no lack of will on our part to continue developing relations with the USA on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

International relations are now at a crossroads, as it were, which could lead either to a growth of trust and cooperation, or else to a growth of mutual fears, suspicion, and arms stockpiles, a crossroads leading, ultimately, either to lasting peace or, at best, to balancing on the brink of war. Detente offers the opportunity of choosing the road of peace. To miss this opportunity would be a crime. The most important, the most pressing task now is to halt the arms race, which has engulfed the world.

Regrettably, the arms build-up continues and acquires ever more dangerous forms. New modifications and types of weapons of mass destruction are being developed, and it is well known on whose initiative this is being done. But every new type is an equation with several unknown quantities in terms of political as well as military-technical or strategic consequences. Rushing from one type of arms to another—on the strength, evidently, of the naive hope of retaining a monopoly of them—only tends to step up the arms race, deepen mutual distrust and hamper disarmament measures.

In this connection I would like to reiterate, most forcefully, something I said earlier. The Soviet Union is effectively looking after its defense capability, but it does not, and will not, seek military superiority over the other side. We do not want to upset the approximate equilibrium of military strength existing at present, say, between East and West in Central Europe, or between the USSR and the USA. But in exchange we insist that no one else should seek to upset it in his favor.

Needless to say, maintaining the existing equilibrium is not an end in itself. We are in favor of starting a downward turn in the curve of the arms race and gradually scaling down the level of the military confrontation. We want to reduce substantially and then eliminate the menace of nuclear war, the most formidable of dangers for humanity. That is the ob-

jective of the well-known proposals of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Today we are proposing a radical step: *that agreement be reached on a simultaneous halt in the production of nuclear weapons by all states*. All such weapons—whether atomic, hydrogen or neutron bombs or missiles. At the same time, the nuclear powers could undertake to start the gradual reduction of existing stockpiles of such weapons, and move towards their complete, total destruction. The energy of the atom for peaceful purposes exclusively—that is the call the Soviet state is making in the year of its sixtieth anniversary to the governments and peoples.

There is another important problem that has a direct bearing on the task of reducing the danger of nuclear war, namely, that of seeing through to the end the work of banning nuclear weapon tests, so that no such tests are conducted underground as well as in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water. We want to achieve progress in the negotiations on this matter and bring them to a successful conclusion. Therefore, we state that we are prepared *to reach agreement on a moratorium covering nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes along with a ban on all nuclear weapon tests for a definite period*. We trust that this important step on the part of the USSR is properly appreciated by our partners at the negotiations and that the road will thus be cleared to concluding a treaty long awaited by the peoples.

The Soviet Union is confidently following the road of peace. It is our active and consistent stand that the contest between socialism and capitalism should be decided not on the field of battle, not on the munitions conveyors, but in the sphere of peaceful work. We want the frontiers dividing these two worlds to be crossed not by missiles with nuclear warheads, but by the threads of broad and diversified cooperation for the good of all mankind. By steadfastly pursuing this policy, we are carrying out one of the main slogans of the October Revolution

and the behests of Lenin: Peace to the peoples!

If it should prove possible to solve the major problem—that of preventing another world war and establishing durable peace—new vistas would open for the inhabitants of the earth. The preconditions would appear for solving many other vitally important problems, which are arising before mankind as a whole in our day.

In our day the world is socially heterogeneous—it is made up of states with different social systems. This is an objective fact. By its inner development and by its approach to international relations the socialist part of the world is setting a good example of the lines along which the major problems arising before mankind can best be solved. But, needless to say, it can not solve them for the whole of humanity. What is needed here are purposeful efforts by the peoples of every country, broad and constructive cooperation by all countries, all peoples. The Soviet Union is wholeheartedly for such cooperation. In this—if one looks deeper—lies the essence of the foreign policy course that we call the course of peaceful coexistence.

Comrades and friends, the achievements of the October Revolution and the potentialities of socialism are today the surest guarantee of mankind's further progress. The October Revolution is the banner of great changes raised aloft over the twentieth century by the will and hands of the working masses.

We are advancing towards the epoch when, in one specific, historically determined form or another, socialism will be the prevailing social system on earth, bringing with it peace, freedom, equality, and well-being to the whole of working mankind.

This is no utopia, no beautiful dream. This is a real prospect. It is brought nearer daily by our work and struggles, comrades. It is brought nearer by the work and struggles of millions of our contemporaries. This is the continuation of the cause begun by the October Revolution.

Brilliant Star of October

GUS HALL

Dear Comrade Brezhnev, honored guests, and you, the representatives of the great Soviet people—who are the breakthrough pioneers and trail blazers in the human species' victorious struggle for social progress. With each day in the successful building of socialism, you are breaking new ground. You are doing that which has no precedent. Yours is, therefore, the honor, the glory, the excitement and the sacrifices of all pioneers.

It is with great joy and happiness that I extend to you the congratulations and the happy 60th anniversary greetings of the millions of workers and people in the United States who are yearning and fighting for a world in peace and detente—greetings of the opponents of imperialism and racism—the congratulations of the partisans of socialism—and the warmest comradely working-class embrace, by the members and leaders of our Party—the Communist Party of the United States.

Sixty years ago a new star was born. A star of a different quality, cast in a new mold, made its explosive appearance on the horizon of human development. For 60 years the light that radiates from it has become ever brighter, the orbit of its influence ever larger. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics has become the brightest star in the universe of human societies.

Your 60 years of socialist construction and your new Constitution stand as a living testimonial, irrefutable proof that socialism is a superior social order. Your 60 years are an exhibit, proof that the birth of socialism was not an accident of history, but the materialization of an idea whose time has come, proof that the moment for the transition from capitalism to socialism had arrived.

It is to the everlasting credit of the Party and the wisdom of Lenin that they understood the laws of social development, the role of the revolutionary energy of the masses. They did not miss the bus of history, the moment, because they focused on, they zeroed in on the revolutionary transition of political power to a coalition of forces led by the working class.

Speech at sixtieth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, Moscow, November 3, 1977.

It is to the glory of the Soviet people that in their revolutionary wisdom they were able to take that which history and objective processes had made possible, and turned them into realities.

Your 60 glorious years are a total refutation of the antisocialist slanders and distortions.

The economic, ideological and political competition between the two world socio-economic systems is inevitable.

It is an expression of the intrinsic contradictions between the two systems and represents the central contradiction of our epoch. Within this framework, the Soviet Union and the United States are viewed by millions as showcases—one of socialism, the other of monopoly capitalism.

With each passing year the socialist showcase is gathering an abundance of trophies for victories in the field of human progress, including the award for the best overall quality of life. With each passing year, the showcase of monopoly capital has less to show. It is increasingly reluctant to put on exhibit the products of its general crisis. The managers of the big business showcase try to cover up the poverty, the racism, the gaping slums, and 60 per cent unemployment in the ghettos, the oppression and exploitation by U.S. corporation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, by demagogic talks about human rights elsewhere.

The showcase of monopoly capital has turned into a showcase of instability, of ailments and crisis, fears and insecurity.

The Soviet Union, rightfully, has earned the deep respect and confidence of all who are struggling for social progress. This confidence is based on 60 years of experience. As if by conditioned reflex, revolutionary fighters, peace advocates, fighters against imperialism and racism, the working-class movements throughout the world, know and take for granted that the Soviet Union will be on their side of the struggle. Based on experience, they have full confidence the Soviet Union will, in all situations, be on the side of anti-imperialism, and not make secret economic, military deals with the butchers of Chile. Based on experience they take for granted the Soviet Union will always be on the side of national

liberation in Angola and South Africa.

Based on 60 years of experience, the people of the world rightly assume that the Soviet Union will continue to be a powerful force for peace and detente.

So, on this 60th anniversary, we can say with confidence that with ever brighter intensity the Union

of Socialist Soviet Republics will illuminate the path of socialism and communism.

Long live the trail blazers to socialism and communism!

Long live the brilliant star of October!

A Beacon of Progress

HENRY WINSTON

Let me, from these sacred grounds, on the occasion of your 60th anniversary, express to Comrade Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Leninist Central Committee of the CPSU, the entire Soviet people, our warm fraternal and revolutionary greetings.

Your march into communism brings happiness to all fighters against imperialism. Your success in all areas of life is a beacon from which fighters for social progress and national emancipation seek inspiration.

Until October 1917, slavery, feudalism and capitalism denied the most elementary human rights to the majority of peoples of the world. The Russian working class, led by the Communist Party headed by V.I. Lenin, welded a unity which overthrew the rule of capital. This was begun by the shot from the Aurora, which reverberated throughout the land and was heard by all exploited and oppressed all over the world.

One of the first acts of the new government was to issue its decree on peace. The world witnessed the nobility and humanism of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

The decree on peace was on the beginning of the foreign policy of the USSR. This policy of peace facilitated the building of socialism in the USSR, was of great assistance to the anti-monopoly movement in capitalist countries fighting for social progress, the national liberation movements fighting imperialism in their struggle for complete independence.

The majority peace movement in the U.S. arose in the fight against the policy of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. It's growing strength is expressed against the barbarity of apartheid fascist rule in South Africa, the Pinochet fascist regime in Chile, the

fight against the imperialist, racist barrage against Panama, the Zionist-led Israeli policy of annexation of Arab lands, the growing movement to break the economic blockade of Cuba, the fight against the huge military budget, the fight to stop the arms race, and above all, for a more rapid pace of development of detente and peaceful co-existence. The resistance to this comes from the most reactionary wing of state monopoly capitalism.

At home there is growing awareness of the need to fight anti-Communism and racism. Every advance on this front is a victory for human rights in the U.S. and strengthens the cause of peace.

The severity of the economic crisis has led to a growing militance in the ranks of the working class, not only in steel, auto, electrical, but also among municipal workers, teachers and other social strata. There is a growing consciousness and rise in independent mass action and a greater struggle against the banks, utilities, landlords and big capital. This can also be said of the Black liberation movement and other minorities' and their allies' fight against racism and political repression.

The fight for the immediate freedom of Ben Chavis and the Wilmington 10 in North Carolina must remain on the agenda of progressive movements of the world. Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners of the capitalist world must be set free.

Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, so magnificently upheld through the last 60 years by the Soviet Union, is admired by progressive mankind everywhere. Communists in the U.S. regard these principles as the only road to total victory over exploitation, national oppression, neo-colonialism and imperialism.

Long live detente and peaceful co-existence.

Long live the fraternal relations between the CPSU and the CPUSA.

Long live Communism.

Speech at sixtieth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, Leningrad, November 5, 1977.

On Reflection and Ideology

MORRIS COLMAN

Whoever begins the serious study of Marxism soon encounters the Marxist theory of knowledge, often called the theory of reflection (in formal terms, epistemology). It is a cornerstone of historical materialism, the Marxist account of historical development, of class relations, laws, customs, culture; and historical materialism is the basis for all Communist programs, from day-to-day struggles to the building of socialism. If the human mind does not accurately reflect the realities of nature and society, then no planning and no technology can be relied on. Marxists hold that human knowledge accurately corresponds to the objective realities with which it deals in practice, though never completely, and sometimes very superficially.

The Marxist theory of reflection is also one of the most contested, distorted, and rejected of Marxist propositions. The attack generally comes from anti-Marxists, but even some who wish to be Marxists think the theory of reflection shows human understanding as merely passive, an inert lump pushed around by all that happens to it. They think that humanity's vast creativity demands a "free spirit" untrammelled by the rules of natural law. Marxists, who place the transformation of quantity into quality, the constant emergence of the new, at the center of dialectics, as shown for instance by the evolutionary history of life on earth, look on humanity's creativity as the understanding observation and use of natural law in the service of humanity's many-sided needs.

Marxists are materialists. Materialism, most briefly characterized, is the assumption that throughout the universe matter is primary, having existed prior to and independent of any ideas in any mind; that there are no ideas other than human ideas; that those are reflections in the minds of humans of the movements of matter in nature and society, the mind itself being a function of the most recently-developed and most highly-organized form of evolving matter, the human brain.

Idealism, summarized with equal brevity, is the assumption that ideas everywhere or somewhere, always or at some time, have priority over matter,

and exercise some form of direct influence over matter, which is thought to be either a creature or servant of thought, to one or another degree. In some idealist systems the sovereign ideas are thought to be in the mind of a deity or other supernatural entity; in others they are in the minds of humans. Every religion, by definition, is based in idealist premises. Some variations of idealism, overt or implicit, are secular. Idealism is the natural outlook of any class that seeks to be served by other social classes, giving orders that others obey.

Philosophical idealists see no need to account for the emergence of ideas. To them, ideas are the basic data of life—the priority of "spirit" over matter. But a theory of knowledge is indispensable to any materialist world-view. The materialist is obliged to explain how a material organism (a human) can know and think. The theory of reflection is the materialist answer. It needs to be considered in detail.

Cognition—Unique Phenomenon

Human cognition is a unique phenomenon. There is nothing known to us with which it could strictly be compared. Any functional term for it must therefore be a metaphor. Reflection, in its common definition, is a movement of matter. Reflected light will register on a photographic film. Reflected sound is a vibration of air. But the term "reflection" used to denote the chief quality of human knowledge is an abstraction from an infinitely complex natural process and therefore does not have substance in the sense that light or sound do. The term is far from satisfactory, since some people think that reflection implies passivity; but other terms are even less precise. To speak of knowledge as "representation" of the thing known seems even less acceptable; it implies a total difference between the object and the knowledge of it. A representation could be a mere symbol, like speech. The term "reflection" is perfectly serviceable if it is used with a thoughtful understanding of what it stands for, which is within everyone's experience.

Languages are socially-evolved systems of common socially-learned symbols with rules of use,

that serve to evoke the inner knowledge or reflection with which words are associated. But without prior individual experience of what any given words and sentences refer to, language is empty. It tells nothing. Language is the necessary guide to knowledge, but it can never be the substance or basis of knowledge; that would be a flat negation of the theory of reflection. Knowledge, mostly socially gained through the guidance of language, is a reflection of reality, based in the first place on active experience with reality. As Lenin put it, "The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 142.)

The special character of language, as a universal set of symbols, is that it can evoke the reflection of reality from any part of one's history. In addition then to its vast social role as systems of social signaling in communication and recording, language plays a decisive creative role in the development of human knowledge. Because it can call to mind an unlimited variety of reflections of events widely separated in time and space, it is socially used to form abstractions and generalizations, and to set up categories of related objects and events. Through its rules of use (syntax) one can bring together any combination of reflections of past or present in order to develop ideal models both of reality (as in science) and of imagined arrangements of reality (as in myth, speculation and art). The creative possibilities of humanity's use of language to arrive at new and higher forms of knowledge and inventions is unlimited, as all history shows.

Language, a system of symbols, can accomplish all that because it can separate us from the reality it symbolizes, and lets us use abstractions, inferences, logic, and the dialectical combination of partial reflections—in other words, it lets us construct the most elaborate and abstract mental models of anything—whole systems of social and technical awareness, that can be validated or falsified by the test of practice. It thus not only serves the most creative uses of philosophy, science, technology, art—but it is equally the prime instrument of myth, error, and particularly of deceit.

Just as Marx, setting out from the proposition that commodities are exchanged at their value on the average, had to solve the problem of how capitalists make a profit, so we have to face the question of how knowledge can accurately reflect

reality and yet allow the errors and especially the deceits that are so commonplace in history.

There is much we never know about anything we deal with. We observe selectively, in relation to access, ability, interest and purposes. What we sense at any given moment is a very limited aspect of what is before us. The immediate reflection is very partial. Any object or event has infinite interconnections and an endless history. We take in something with our senses, but that tells us little or nothing of its history, its composition, its origins, its connections or its qualities beyond what is evident to our senses. The event has meaning only if we already know a great deal more about it than we see here and now. Sometimes all we can see and know from previous experience is so completely "one-sided" that it can not guide us to any effective action. That is ignorance, or, if we act against our interests, error.

Truth, Absolute and Relative

But if I pick up a stone, throw it, and hit my target, then my mental reflection of the stone and its situation, my position and movements, interval and position of target, etc., is absolutely sufficient for my limited purpose. In that sense, my cognition has truly reflected all the relevant aspects of that reality. There is a real and effective correspondence between my subjectivity, my action, and the external realities with which it interacts. I know of no term that begins to convey the real, dialectical relation of reality, knowledge, and action other than "reflection," metaphorical as it may be. It is definitely not a passive relation. We have the obligation to look beyond the metaphor to the reality it symbolizes, and use the metaphor with understanding of the complex reality behind it.

The same absolute quality of a relative set of reflections of reality is illustrated in the sending of men to the moon and back. There is probably no single individual whose mind reflects all the immensely complicated realities that were needed to produce the elaborate apparatus, the guidance systems, power sources, and general know-how involved. That was a product of ages-long social practice and observation and analysis and abstraction. Much of the final knowledge was worked out in mathematical equations. But all of it harks back ultimately to concrete direct material scientific investigations in all manner of physical experiments. There remains an infinity of knowledge still

to be gained from further study and experimentation and action in this area, but what was known was absolutely sufficient to accomplish the plan—to put men on the moon to carry out certain tasks, and then to return safely to earth.

What is known in such an endeavor is absolutely true with reference to the accomplished task, but only relatively true with respect to all that is yet to be learned.

Lenin developed that theme in a famous fragment entitled “On Dialectics,” that appears in all editions of *Materialism and Empirio Criticism*. It repays thoughtful study. He says in part (emphasis his): “Philosophical idealism is *only* nonsense from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. On the other hand, from the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated . . . development . . . of one of the features, sides, facets of knowledge into an absolute, divorced from matter, from nature, apotheosized. Idealism is clericalism. True. But philosophical idealism is . . . a road to clericalism *through one of the shades* of the infinitely complex knowledge (dialectical) of man. . . . It is a *sterile flower* undoubtedly, but it is a sterile flower that grows on the living tree of living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, absolute human knowledge.” Note Lenin’s use of “absolute.” I have drastically shortened his statement, but I believe without affecting his meaning, in order to emphasize Lenin’s view that even “sterile” socially-held positions are to be seen not merely as error, but as deceptively incomplete constructions on the basis of reflections that do not include one or another essential aspect of reality.

Error—Insufficient Reflection

It can correctly be said that in the materialist theory of knowledge the subjective reflection that guides any action is *absolutely true to as much as it reflects*. That is the only possible meaning of “reflection” in this context. To be precise, one can not speak of a “false reflection,” though such expressions are often used as shorthand for the contradiction between partial reflection and whole reality. There is sufficient reflection for the task, as proved by successful practice, or there is insufficient, “one-sided” (to use Lenin’s term) reflection that, being inadequate to the task, adds up to ignorance or error.

How can one describe a “subjective reflection,”

an item of human knowledge, the inner reality we are talking about? You know yours and I know mine, but we have never looked at the same one in order to agree on just what is there. In the form of consciousness, it remains a private experience for each individual, however social its origin. But consciousness has vital functions. It is the necessary prelude or preparation for action in the presence of anything that is new in a situation (anything not so familiar that it is “taken for granted,” and can be dealt with while attention is directed elsewhere; sometimes too much is “taken for granted,” and the response is a wrong one). Consciousness also makes volition possible: we can foresee the probable results of an action, judge them, and react accordingly.

To begin with, since every human is in all respects a part of society, has been born into it and has no existence independent of it, all knowledge is socially-mediated knowledge, learned and used in a social context. We could not understand or use even the simplest experience if we had never had social guidance. A moment of consciousness generally begins with an event impinging on the senses, though it may be mainly an inner stimulus, a thought or a memory. But nothing that strikes the senses here and now conveys any meaning of its own. If nothing like it had ever been met, it would tell nothing concrete at all. The meaning has to come in the last analysis from like experience in the past, which no longer exists except as inner effects and traces from the past. Those traces exist only as established dispositions in the brain until they issue in thought and action. But that is not enough to define the content of consciousness. Since every human is in every respect a socially-conditioned being, any action, however simple, in response to any event will get its direction from the individual’s social consciousness, by his sense of what effect his response will have on his social relations. All these components of consciousness reflect the individual’s value system, which a lifetime of social interaction has developed into a scale of values from very bad to very good. Every experience and every action contains its own “feeling-tone,” or emotional color, that expresses that value and enters into the purposes of the action. The word “reflection” then is an abstraction for a very complex socially-conditioned process that combines the immediate effect of external reality with the meaning and direction the process receives from a

completely hidden set of unique dispositions laid down throughout the individual's whole history—a dialectical unity of the objective and subjective, which adds up to a potential for action that no scientific procedure now known can pinpoint, and that can change at any moment as the inner result of new experiences or newly-evoked memories.

Unlike external reality, which can be socially known, the inner events that we know as cognition, thought, consciousness, feeling, are unpredictably changeable. They obey inner dispositions created in individual history, and we can not know them socially in the way we can know external reality. They are momentary images of objective reality that serve as signals for our real actions. All the terms used to denote that process: reflection, consciousness, etc., are abstractions, words that stand for an entirely elusive reality going on inside the brain.

The term "material" often crops up in discussions of the theory of knowledge. It has more than one meaning. Marxists hold with Lenin that "there is nothing in the world except matter in motion." (*Ibid.*, p. 175.) It is quite correct, therefore, to say that everything in the universe is material (using the term as adjective). But there is a profound difference in practice and in theory between the knowledge of objective matter, that which moves and can be socially known, on the one hand, and on the other hand knowledge of functions or qualities of matter-motion that are known only subjectively—the private processes of consciousness and thought. The matter involved in these processes (the thinking brain) is objective, it has mass and energy, we know of its motion. But the meaning of the motion, its quality as a signal, is subjective and may be different for each person (but knowledge socially tested in practice and adequate to its use takes on objectivity, as I have shown above). Our individual sensitivity to the signaling quality of reflected events (our consciousness), a subject-object relation, not an object, can properly be called "non-material" (not composed of matter) in the sense that it has neither mass nor energy. But that quality is not "spirit" in the historical idealist meaning of that term, and it has no motion of its own. Lenin emphasized that point when he wrote: "the attempt to think of motion without matter smuggles in *thought* divorced from matter—and that is philosophical idealism." (Anyone interested in detailed and scientific data on the working of the mind is

referred to Alexander R. Luria, *The Working Brain and Cognitive Development: Its Social and Cultural Foundations*, and L.S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*.)

The Birth of Ideologies

The fact that all knowledge, the subjective reflection, is partial, one-sided, true to a degree but always incomplete, has important meanings for everyday social and political life. Marx wrote that "social consciousness reflects social being," and Lenin added that social consciousness never reflects all of social being, and can never be equated with it. That fact accounts for the phenomenon of ideologies. An ideology is a self-contained, self-consistent, systematic world outlook. Men and women have often been ready to give up their lives in defense of an ideology.

Ideologies make history. In a famous figure of speech, Marx wrote: ". . . theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." (*Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 182.) On the other hand, so long as the ideology of a ruling class is accepted by the masses, no significant social change is possible.

One might identify a vast number of distinct ideologies in history—religious, national, etc.—but all have this in common: they represent the interests of a class. Just as individual interests determine the direction taken by consciousness, so do class interests dominate all ideologies. But that could not guarantee the vitality of an ideology if it did not contain another essential element: every ideology to survive has to be based in true reflection of enough of reality to make the outlook it fosters plausible.

The most obvious ideology is that of an exploiting class. Any member must exploit or go under. Every workable means of exploitation gets its sanction, including racism, sexism, speedup, union-busting, unemployment; all in their turn become legitimate, even necessary parts of the money-making process. The successful businessman accurately reflects all the conditions of his business, as witnessed by his profits.

The relatively small group of owners of the nation's principal means of life see themselves as the indispensable directors of national life, and in conditions of modern capitalism indeed they are, and their role is bowed to by presidents, governments, congresses. The schools, churches, media of all kinds appear to accept that as a fact of life. The

president of General Motors who is reported to have said "What is good for General Motors is good for the nation" probably believed it.

Though they may seem to be in opposition to the monopolists, the many varieties of liberal reformers, on analysis, are found to have an ideology like theirs in essence. Their efforts are never directed at abolishing exploitation; on the contrary, in order to protect the system of exploitation they try to mitigate what they regard as its dangerous excesses.

An ideology does not necessarily represent the interests of its adherents. A large proportion of American workers, for example, still accept the necessity of private ownership of the nation's means of life, and act under the spell of capitalist ideology, because it seems to reflect the reality of life as they see it. They fight for better wages and conditions, for a better social position under capitalism. But they still see capitalism, even in its horrendous imperialist form, with all its racism, sexism, violence, unemployment, deprivation and misery, as the way things are and have to be. At times they champion their own class enemies, even fight for them, and look on one or another section of their own class, with whom they feel in competition for jobs and whatever good things of life are available, as the enemy.

A tragic example is the phenomenon of racism, based on a constant widespread campaign of deceit by the ruling class and its servants that stand to gain by dividing the working class, with no more reflection of reality than superficial differences of race and culture. How superficial that reflection is can be demonstrated by the fact that fighting side by side for a common objective is the most effective destroyer of race prejudice.

Such self-defeating but often strongly-held ideologies have their basis in a reflection of very superficial facts, upon which an army of ideologues, clergy, teachers, writers, thinkers, artists, themselves often victims of the same one-sided outlook, build a tremendous superstructure of speculation, myth and art intended to rationalize what is.

The deep natural feelings of brotherhood and love of fatherland that reflect the realities of interdependent social living, expressed in various forms of social consciousness, are mobilized in the service of imperialism, chauvinism, aggressive wars, even fascism, by the class that stands to profit by them, and by its supporters. Millions of men and women have fought and died in the interests of their own

oppressors. The history of humanity, especially in the economically advanced, imperialist nations, has been a history of mass deceit. Those obvious facts do not invalidate the Marxist theory of knowledge, but they show how far much of humanity has to go in seeing below the surface appearance of things before it can achieve mastery over its own fate.

Marx, Engels and Lenin have vividly described how little of the decisive facts of social-economic relations are visible to ordinary observation. No one understood the whole scene scientifically until Marx, Engels and Lenin discovered and revealed it.

If one has not learned to question the very basis of the socio-economic system into which one is born and brought up, then all the horrors to be seen in the non-socialist world seem to be essential aspects of things as they have to be (regrettably, no doubt). Even bourgeois science plays its role in many ways, one of the most important being the theories of "unchanging human nature" that are still common, and racist theories based on wholly unscientific "IQ" procedures.

One important point to bear in mind, as Lenin made clear, is that the horrors of today's life outside of socialism are not mere results of wickedness or even selfishness of those responsible, which could then be cured by a "change of heart," or some kind of reform. If that were the case, there would be no need of revolutionary change, no need to transfer ownership and the power it confers from private owners out for profit to the workers of factory, field, and office able to achieve abundance and full opportunity for all.

The theory of knowledge also makes clear why little is accomplished politically by education alone, without active struggle around real issues. Every hearer tries first to fit what he hears into his ready-made ideological system, to subordinate it to what part of reality he is already familiar with. Some workers believe that higher wages feed inflation. Some, who may be unemployed, fear for their "individual freedom" under socialism. Words point the way, but it is experience that teaches. The example of dedicated struggle for known needs, along with political illumination, is the only thing that will bring home to the great masses the realities behind exploitation, racism, nationalism, wars and develop and spread wide a truly working-class ideology, that reflects the most basic social relations and shows how they may be changed.

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