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Journal of the Communist Party USA

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PA FUND DRIVE

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We require your assistance in an important project – making *Political Affairs* a better and more influential mass working-class Marxist-Leninist journal. Over the past year we have undertaken some important innovative changes.

We have added to the content, making room for short stories, poetry, essays and editorial commentary in addition to basic articles dealing with the working class, the class struggle, racism, economics and ideology.

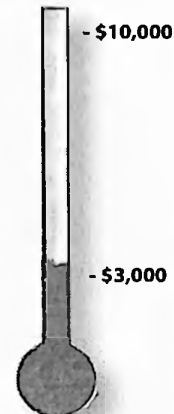
We have broadened the circle of those who contribute on a regular basis, and have added several new people to our editorial board.

We have increased paper size and quality, making greater use of photographs and paintings, and are designing a new masthead for the magazine. Let us know what you think.

Political Affairs is making all of these changes because the times demand it. A mass popular *PA* is needed to help mold the thinking and fighting quality of the working class as we enter a new millennium of struggle.

Our working class has always been supportive and understanding. You can help make our dream for *PA* become a reality. The response so far is great. We've reached \$3,000 of our \$10,000 goal. If you like what we are doing, please show it by making as large a contribution as possible. We are counting on you.

-PA Editorial Board



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CPUSA Ideological Conference

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

"A mighty battle of ideas confronts us at the beginning of the 21st Century," states the call to the Communist Party's Ideological Conference. To explore these ideas and to involve the entire Party will be the challenge of the discussion period leading up to the conference this fall.

The process of preparing for the conference is just as important as the conference itself. A key role in organizing Party-wide discussion has to be played by the clubs, the structure that reaches the majority of members.

We would like to urge you to begin organizing discussions at each club meeting. We suggest that the opening discussion

Continued on page 18

U.S. IMPERIALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

We bring you warmest greetings from the National Committee of the Communist Party USA and from our National Chairman, comrade Gus Hall. We express our greatest appreciation to the Communist Party of Greece for its work in initiating and organizing this conference. The world Communist movement has struggled and matured in the past period. This conference comes at a very important moment. The dust has settled and the basis for moving forward from the setbacks to socialism is greater now than ever before. There is a higher level of unity and the possibility of further deepening it.

The globalization of the world capitalist economy, the world capitalist crisis and the military adventures led by U.S. imperialism have sharpened the class struggle from which new levels of Communist and working-class unity are being forged. This conference itself is a demonstration of that new and expanding unity. We must find every opportunity to come together, to meet, to discuss and to act in uni-

Lee Dlugin is a member of the national board of the CPUSA.

Lee Dlugin | The dust

has settled and the
basis for moving
forward now exists.

son.

U.S. imperialism has become bolder and more aggressive. Its aim is to create a one-nation world state which it would dominate. In addition to its economic expansionism, it uses military force, with ever-new weaponry of mass destruction in its quest for world hegemony. U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright put it like this: "If we have to use force, it is because we are America! We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future."

It is this outrageous policy which is the underlying reason for the U.S. imperialist aggression and bombing in Yugoslavia. The bombing of the

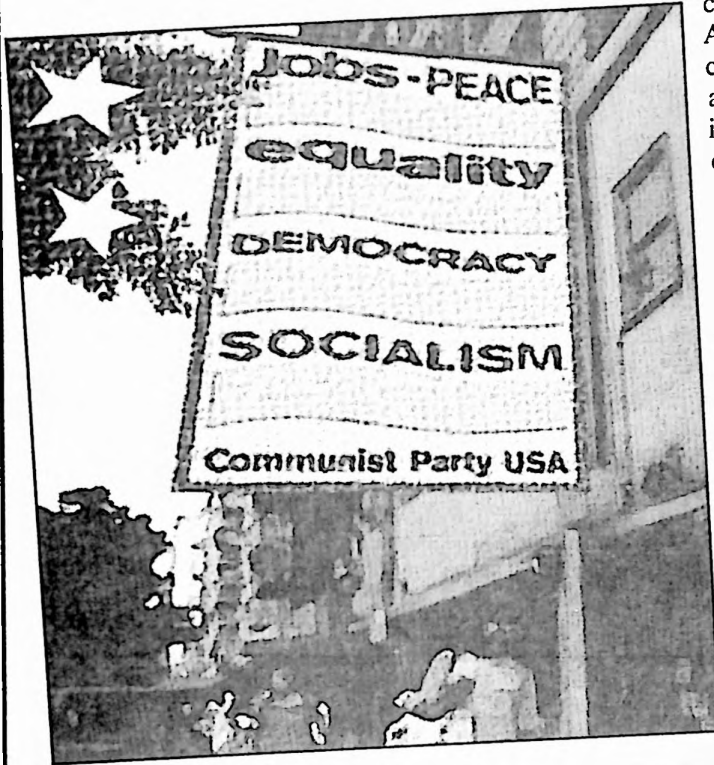


Lee Dlugin at World Communist Conference.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China has laid bare the now admitted truth that this is U.S. imperialism's dirty war, directed by the CIA, and that NATO is a thinly veneered cover for this terrorist war against the people of Yugoslavia. U.S. imperialism seeks to "balkanize" the Balkans and exercise its control over all of Europe and is using NATO to carry out its drive for maximum profits and for further expansion into the oil-and-mineral rich areas of Eastern Europe and Asia. Just days after the bombing began, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department had the gall to proclaim the United States a European power.

In the United States, as in all countries, there is mass anger and action against the war. There have been anti-war actions across the country demanding an immediate end to the bombing and no ground troops. Trade unions, peace organizations, civil

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rights groups, the churches and millions of people from all walks of life are expressing their opposition to the war. This is seen in the vote of the U.S. Congress against the use of ground troops. It took five years to reach this level of response against the war in Vietnam. Because of the pressure of the American people and the demonstrations worldwide, this came after five weeks in the war against Yugoslavia.

Our Party has been a leading force in these developments. It continues to struggle to broaden the anti-war movement. And now we have a journalist in Belgrade who will be very useful in bringing the impact of the war in Yugoslavia to the U.S. people. The war is already impacting heavily on the quality of life of the American people. The billions already spent on the war are being taken from the social welfare funds. Hardest hit are the senior citizens and children. They are being deprived of the basic necessities of life. The brutality of U.S. foreign policy is coupled with the brutal domestic poli-

cy against the American working class. There is an atmosphere that life is cheap. Across the country, police violence and killing against the people, especially African Americans and other racially and nationally oppressed people, are rising precipitously.

The Joint Statements issued by the Balkan Communist Parties, the Communist Parties of the NATO countries, the Communist Parties of the

Arab countries, the Communist and Left Parties of Europe, and all other statements of Communist Parties have been important factors in building the anti-war sentiment. This demonstrates the importance of world Communist unity and action. We should examine the possibilities of some kind of coordinated Communist-led action against the war. A very important first step in this direction is the signing of the draft Joint Statement Against the Criminal War Against Yugoslavia. We are in full agreement with the draft presented here. This is the time to implement the proposal made last year by the Belarus Communist Party for a conference for the abolition of NATO and the proposal made in this conference by the Communist Party of Greece in Comrade Papariga's presentation.

The globalization of the world economy stems from the drive for maximum profits of all leading capitalist countries. However, they are just junior partners to the U.S. transnational corporations, whose power engulfs

not only developing countries but also the rival imperialist countries. The U.S. penetration is concentrated in basic and heavy industries and raw materials – in steel, auto, and oil production. U.S. capitalism has gotten so rich by the extraction of superprofits from privatization and lowering wages and living standards in the United States and other countries where they have gained control that they now use those excess profits through the IMF to make loans to the countries they have devastated. While U.S. imperialism is the mortgage holder on all these economies, it has to deal with the mortgaged economies unable to meet IMF obligations. This leads to the compounding of the crisis and conflicts. The presence of U.S. military forces around the world serves as the guarantor and collector of the debt for U.S. imperialism.

All trade agreements such as NAFTA, GATT, the proposed MAI, etc., are geared to deepening the control of the U.S. transnational corporations. The trade agreements, the easy, quick use of military aggression, and the U.S. State Department declarations of control described earlier make it clear there is no democracy in the MAI/imperialist process. Its motto is "live in bondage within or be destroyed."

The global economy is impacting deeply on the U.S. working class and people. The export of capital to low-wage areas has served to deindustrialize the U.S. economy. In addition, there is a continuing process of monopoly mergers, resulting in hundreds of thousands of layoffs. Basic industry factory closings have resulted in the loss of high-paying union-wage jobs. The greatest job growth in the U.S. is in the low-wage, unskilled service industries. The working class has been largely denuded of its skills. There is massive unemployment and underemployment at the same time the weekly hours of work rise. There are 21 million unemployed, part-time and temporary workers. Over 43 million

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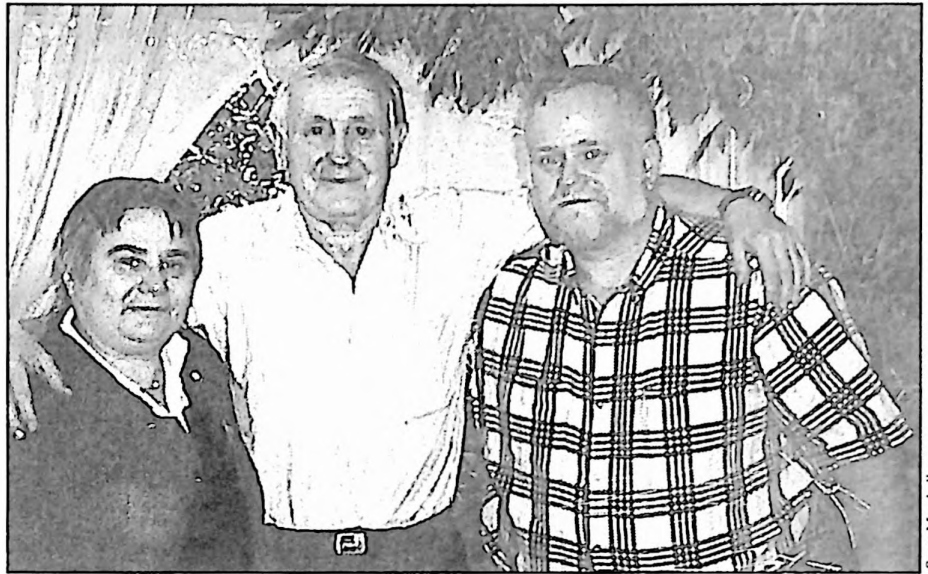
people have no medical care protection of any kind. There are five million homeless people. Over 37 million people are illiterate. One out of every five children goes to bed hungry. Over 80 percent of African American teenagers are unemployed. The government closes its eyes to the easy flow of narcotics into the country. Drugs serve to pacify large numbers of people and remove them from the struggle.

The U.S. ruling class has launched a national effort to destroy free public education. It is trying to privatize education, create an educated elite, and leave millions without learning and training for the new millennium. This fight against public education is being led by the ultra-right and corporations.

There have been new, positive changes in the trade union movement. The Cold War leaders who dominated the AFL-CIO for 40 years were defeated and replaced by progressive, more militant people. Additionally, the new leadership removed the clauses in the AFL-CIO constitution which specifically barred the Communist Party and its members from leadership positions. The new policies are based on class struggle trade unionism. Strike solidarity, organizing the unorganized workers, building election coalitions between the labor movement and the community are the cornerstones of the new forward-looking policies.

The trade union movement played the decisive mass role in the defeat of the ultra-right, pro-fascist forces in the 1998 U.S. elections. They educated and organized millions of people to vote against the ultra-right. The AFL-CIO is preparing for the year 2000 elections. It will run 2000 labor candidates and is speeding up its coalition building. The group is creating a multi-million dollar fighting fund to further defeat the ultra right and reverse government policies.

Strike struggles in the United States are sharp and long. There are



Lee Delugin and Scott Marshall with Branco Kitanovic, leader of Communists in Yugoslavia.

Scott Marshall

strikes in steel, coal, auto, transportation and many other industries. Workers are fighting to put an end to union contracts which contained cuts in wages and benefits and are now fighting for new gains. Only last Wednesday in New York City, 50,000 workers demonstrated at Wall Street against privatization, wage-cutting, job export, child labor and all other forms of corporate plunder of working people.

Our Party and newspaper, the *People's Weekly World*, has been an integral part of all of these struggles. Leaders of the trade union movement refer to our newspaper as labor's paper. It has received awards for its strike support coverage. We have developed a new method of mass outreach, a weekly 30-minute television program, *Changing America*. It is already showing in more than 24 major cities.

The early '90s were very tumultuous times for the world Communist movement. During this period it struggled to maintain the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In our situation the fight for Marxism-Leninism led to the stability of our Party. Thousands of new members have joined our Party in the recent period. This is a reflection of the change in thought patterns and the decline in anti-Communism. There is a

very substantial growth in anti-monopoly feeling, even a hatred and anger at monopoly activity and the harm it is causing people. People know that capitalism cannot solve their problems and the crisis of everyday living.

They know the only aim of the system is to make profits. Therefore they don't see where they fit into such a system, or what it has to offer them. When they join the Party, they see themselves joining an organization that is working to change conditions, to improve life, and to create a more equal society, economically, politically and socially. They may not yet know what socialism is but they want to learn about it. Therefore we have placed great priority on presenting socialism as the solution to the crisis of capitalism.

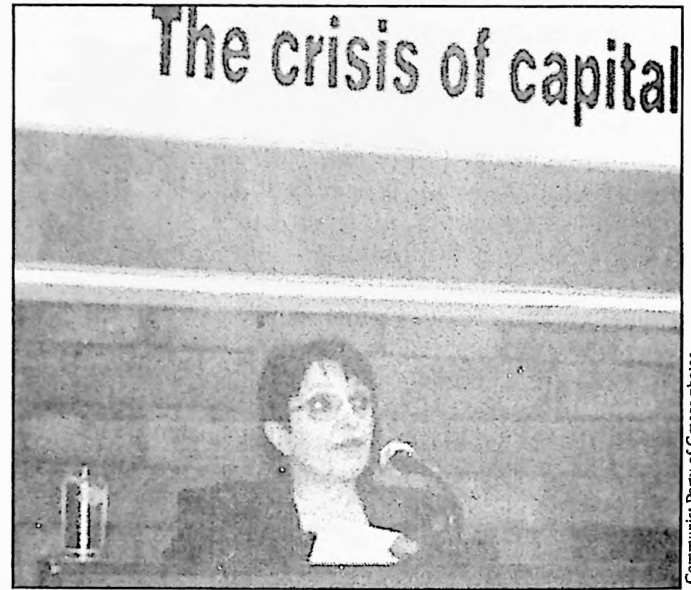
We are entering a new century. The struggle lies between the efforts of U.S. imperialism to control all human activity and resort to war to enforce its aims and the fight back of the people. U.S. imperialism comes into direct conflict with the aims and aspirations and main direction of the class struggle of the working class and people of the world who seek peace, peaceful construction, social development and socialism. The 21st century is our century. It is the century of socialism. □

Aleka Papariga

Under the dark

shadow of war a severe crisis of the modern imperialist system unfolds

CAPITALIST CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT



Aleka Papariga addresses conference of Communist and Workers parties.



Our meeting is being held today under the dark shadow of the Euro-Atlantic war against Yugoslavia. This is a tragic event which constitutes one of the most representative expressions of the capitalist crisis and of the trends and contradictions that appeared in the modern imperialist system after the victory of the counter-revolutionary forces during the period between 1989 and 1991.

With NATO's new action doctrine, and its implementation in practice in Yugoslavia, the entire system of international security that was created

after two world wars is in a state of crisis. A new chapter is opening and not even for the Balkans alone, but for the whole world. Both we and the people must be ready to face the the military and terrorist operations of the NATO multinational forces, There can be no complacency whatsoever, because crisis and inter-imperialist rivalries will bring new operations in many places of the world.

The CPG believes that the most immediate and basic issue is to demand a halt to the war, or the withdrawal of governments from the war, and to demand that NATO troops should not be deployed either in Kosovo or in Yugoslavia more generally on the pretext of arbi-

tration or upholding the peace.

From this podium, we would like to salute the decisions on the part of Communist, Workers', Left and other progressive parties to condemn this new imperialist barbarism; the announcements by the Communist Parties of the Balkan countries; by Communist and Workers' parties in NATO member states; the announcement by the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Arab Countries; the initiative by AKEL in Nicosia against the bombing; the announcement by the parties from all over Europe taking part in it; and the constant demonstrations, protests and events held in solidarity with the

suffering people of Yugoslavia.

During the meeting held in Athens in January to prepare the topics for our meeting today, there was a fertile, rich discussion and an exchange of views about themes related to the crisis and so-called "globalization."

We remember the discussions that took place on these issues between the parties of GUE/NGL; many documents from congresses such as that of the Communist Party of India (M), the South African Communist Party, the Portuguese CP, the CP of Spain, the Communist and Workers' Party of Russia, the CP of the Russian Federation, the Union of

Aleka Papariga is general-secretary of the Greek Communist Party.

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CP-CPSU; the appeal regarding the Multilateral Agreement of Investments (MAI) signed by the CPs of the U.S.A., Canada and Australia; the interesting articles that have appeared in party newspapers and magazines; and the meetings of economists organized in Cuba and other countries of Latin America.

Please allow me to move on now to some issues of concern to our Party that are related to the theme of this meeting, and to put forward some of our views.

REGARDING "GLOBALIZATION" ■

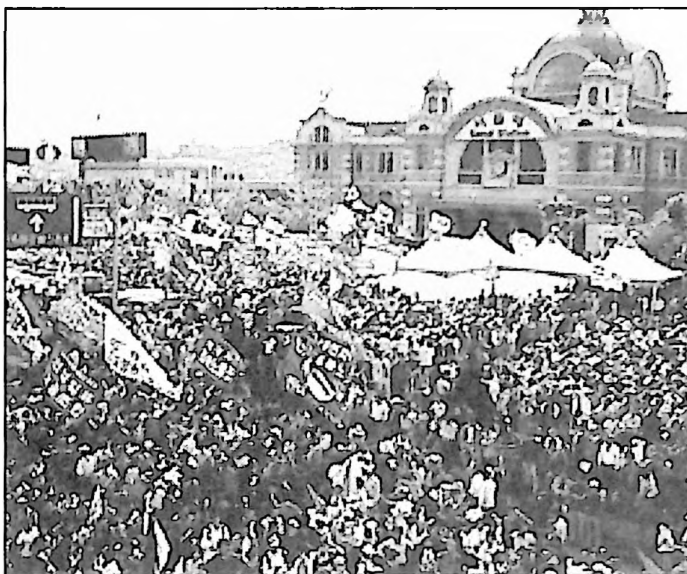
The views about globalization expressed by bourgeois politicians, intellectuals and scientists are fragmentary, since phenomena are presented in an isolated way, detached from their relationship with this society's mode of production.

The laws that drive the capitalist mode of production are concealed, as are the conditions for its abolition, which exist within it.

The modern trends in the global capitalist economy accentuate the exploitative and barbaric nature of the capitalist system in the imperialist stage, with the following very characteristic features. Unemployment, poverty, hunger and misery assume gigantic dimensions, as it is no longer easy for capitalism to blunt or to temporarily check their manifestation, with the classical methods once used. In spite of the fact that, internationally, the correlation of forces remains negative, it is nonetheless becoming increasingly manifest that the margins for maneuvers for the capitalist system are growing desperately narrower.

The basic economic contradiction in capitalism becomes deeper and more acute.

The conflict between imperialism and the peoples of the dependent, oppressed countries is becoming more intense as the interimperialist antagonisms become sharper and the imperialists' pursuit of domination and their



South Korean May Day celebration.

rapacious exploitation of the peoples are stepped up.

The hot spots of local wars are being expanded; the dangers of new wars and nationalist confrontations are increasing. Regular nuclear testing continues. Humanity cannot feel sure that the danger of a more general military clash has been avoided.

The pollution of the atmosphere, the irreversible damages to the animal and vegetable life, and the transformation of developing countries into disposal areas for the wastes of the imperialist forces and into sites for polluting industries show that the environment has proved to be a sensitive indicator of imperialism's mania for destruction.

New technologies in the hands of the monopolies not only fail to increase the people's opportunities for access to knowledge, but are being used to exercise greater control and manipulation. High technology coexists alongside phenomena of absolute and functional illiteracy and low educational levels.

There are analogous repercussions from the influence of monopoly control over the direction of scientific research.

We would point out that on this

fundamental issue, the process of arriving at an agreement between liberal ideology and the social democratic viewpoint has already gone ahead. This phenomenon is now obvious in Western Europe. The agreement is being extended to many countries or regions to include forces that stand to the left of social

democracy, aiming at a collaboration with it, under the now familiar title of the center-left. The center-left today, especially after the war against Yugoslavia, has shown its true face, demonstrating that it leads with mathematical certainty to trapping forces into supporting both capitalist restructuring and the aggressive NATO doctrine.

The fashioning of the term "globalization" into a myth with mystic



Mexican May Day celebration.

World Conference of Communist Parties



Brazilian workers May Day celebration.

overtone has been accompanied by the promotion of a system of concepts according to which various associations, organizations and alliances devised by imperialism all have the characteristics of a one-way street – an irrevocable decision. In this way an effort is made not only to limit or debase any resistance to their choices, but also to make it virtually inconceivable for people, movements, countries and regions to seek alternative forms of cooperation on the basis of mutual interest. An effort is being made to eliminate even the thought of the prospect of socialism on a national level from the orientations of the labor movement. We consider it our duty to show the people that the imperialist associations, international and regional, whether loosely or tightly organized, are forms of capitalist integration and that they serve the vested interests of big capital, consequently subject to the laws of the class struggle. This is how we treat the EU and NATO, which certainly does not hinder, but even makes it easier for us to have a direct intervention in all fronts of struggle.

CRISIS OF 1997-1998 ■ We consider it very important to keep studying the development of the capitalist crisis and to monitor its cycles which certainly do not appear in a synchronized way, but also occur within imperialist organizations and among states. For Greece, for example a characteristic feature is that the cycle of crisis appears more frequently than in other EU. countries, which is also due to its dependent position.

The 1997-1998 crisis has all the features of a classic crisis of overproduction. There was an unprecedented drop in the price of raw materials as the price index for the 22 most important commodities fell to the lowest levels in 26 years and the price of industrial products were at a standstill.

The crisis will grow deeper in due course, all its contradictions will grow sharper, and capitalism's aggression will gain in intensity and brutality. We must all follow the developments, so that subjective factors can be prepared accordingly. The crisis contains a dynamic that could radicalize broader social strata. For this to be expressed politically and channeled toward the dispute requires a correct and clear orientation, the right strategy and considered tactics on a national and international level. Today, it is not enough to talk about organizing the struggle around various problems or looking for more effective means of developing political awareness.

This must become a central issue for

the Communist movement, because alongside the radicalization, there is a growing tendency of passivity, disillusionment, disenchantment with politics, and giving up the struggle. This tendency is being reinforced by the policy pursued by capital and the bourgeois parties, and is becoming stronger to the degree that Communists continue to have delays or deficiencies in this field. The danger of incorrect or wrong choices is always present and at times heightened. Therefore, it is vitally necessary to ensure constant vigilance, particularly under the present conditions of victory by the counter-revolution.

It is very important to study the modern imperialist pyramid in greater depth.

In our view, we must all work hard and make an effort to exchange experiences and data so that we can study more deeply the modern imperialist pyramid, and the multiform, complex relationships being developed in the hierarchy of this pyramid, as well as the conflicts that occur.

At the top of the imperialist pyramid is a system composed of a handful of countries: the Group of Seven, or G7. These most powerful imperialist



CPUSA at Washington demonstration.

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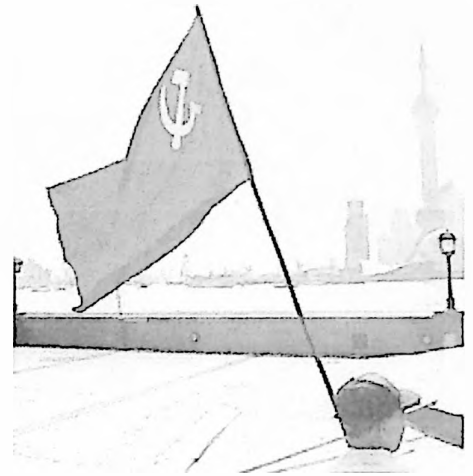
countries exert their domination and intensify oppression on the greater part of the world through a dense network of international organizations, agreements, threats and extortions. The U.S., Japan and four European countries are leaders in the three imperialist centers that have been created. Recently, the Russian Federation has also – with special status – been taking part. But around the leading powers and their centers, there are certain countries that play the role of regional enforcers of imperialist policy. Some claim this role, others are in a more or less permanent position of dependence and inferiority, and yet others function merely as pawns. There are countries – and here we can mention our own country Greece – which find themselves in a field of sharpened imperialist conflicts between the leading countries, and play the dual two-faced role of both oppressor and oppressed.

The general view is that the U.S. holds the top position in the imperialist pyramid today. Of course, the facts confirm this assessment. However, we should not underestimate the views of international organizations and officials who believe that the competition between, e.g. the EU and the U.S. has

not yet been judged, and is still evolving. Some believe that the game has been won today by the U.S., while others predict that the U.S. has a profound crisis just ahead.

The problem is that frequently the discovery of the leading role of the U.S. is used as an excuse to lighten the burden of responsibility on the other imperialist forces around critical issues like the war in Yugoslavia. In Greece and elsewhere, an effort is being made to portray the participation of the EU in this war as an example of weakness and not as a conscious class choice. All the evidence demonstrates that the inroads made against the workers' gains have a more general class character; this does not arise exclusively from the hegemony of the U.S. but also from the needs of the capitalist system. Likewise, it should not be forgotten that the disintegration of Yugoslavia started from a European initiative, bearing the seal of Germany, and that the EU provoked the intervention of the U.S. beyond and independently of the U.S.'s inclination not to leave the matter on a purely European level.

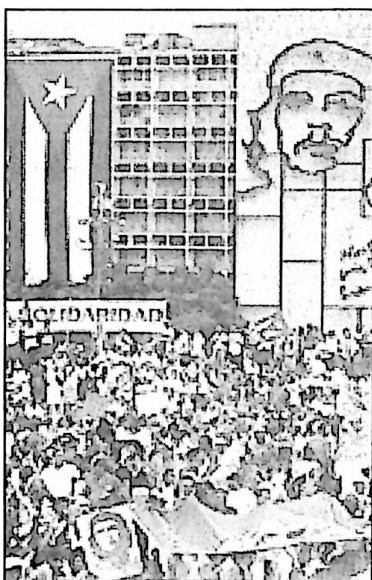
CONFRONTING THE CRISIS ■ In our opinion, attention should always be focused on the growing social repercussions arising from changes in the structure of employment and the economy (increased profits and the rapid rise in the unemployment rate, the stagnation and even decline of salaries and wages, while working people's productivity is increasing). There are also effects on the political awareness and behavior of the working people, young people, women and other segments of the society. It should be noted that in some countries, there are positive trends, which should be supported. There are increasingly frequent cases occurring of strikes and other mobilizations by the working people that do not have the approval of the compromised trade union leaderships,



or are in direct conflict and dispute with the policy of class collaboration that they follow. This constitutes significant evidence of health on the part of the working people and their will to fight to prevent the capitalists from making their living and working conditions constantly worse.

This struggle by the working class expresses just one aspect of its clash with capital – resisting the trend toward the growing deterioration of its situation in bourgeois society. Comparing the results of this struggle shows that whatever benefits the working class may have extracted from the capitalist class, the gap between the social situation of the working people and that of the capitalists is constantly widening and all of the important gains made during this period, such as the 8-hour day, the 5-day week, social security, lower retirement age and others, are now being revoked.

We could develop a large, coordinated and persistent campaign to inform working people about where the character of the measures taken under the general title of “flexibility in the labor market” are leading, and about where “flexible working hours,” the abolition of the 8-hour day, the spread of part-time work and piece



Cuban May Day celebration.

AP photo

World Conference of Communist Parties



Cambodian May Day celebration.

work, etc. are going as well.

Undoubtedly one of the most significant forms of the working class' financial struggle is the fight for a shorter working day. But the question that arises is the following: even if shorter working hours mitigates the problem of unemployment somewhat, can this reduction by itself rid the capitalist society of unemployment?

Can the working class effectively keep up with technological change, making technology their servant, solely by fighting from below against forces that serve the interests of capital?

Can there ultimately be a way out of the working class' financial struggle against the effects of capitalist accumulation that will neither reproduce the causes of the crisis, nor lead to more intense crises?

There is no doubt that the struggles against the capitalists by the working people to improve their lot constitute a significant aspect of the class struggle. Nevertheless, in these struggles, the working people are still fighting against these effects rather than their causes. This, in our view, underscores the need for political struggle by the working class and the other working people, in creating possibilities to challenge the system itself.

We point to the need for the economic struggle to be directly linked with the political struggle and ultimately for the former to be subjected to the latter. This problem, which is an old one for the Communist movement, is being put forward today in new terms.

Consequently, an effort must be made by the working class and other popular strata to become ever more deeply acquainted with the essence of imperialism, with the character and nature of imperialist associations, and with the causes of the imperialist war.

Another serious element in the ideological and political intervention of the labor movement, in our view, should be the systematic criticism of the various forms of management that are put forward as alternative proposals for remedying crisis. These include unemployment, poverty and even war, e.g. views "borrowed" from the period of Keynesian arrangements that turn a blind eye to the facts. Other proposals of a completely utopian nature suppose that our age might return to pre-monopoly capitalism.

Promoting the realistic prospect and necessity of socialism is one of our most important duties, in our view, not simply as a nostalgic view of the past, but as a strategic goal that can influence the daily individual fronts of struggle. This can realistically and necessarily move in an anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist direction.

An integral part of the struggle to solve the working people's financial and social problems and to deal with unemployment, poverty and austerity, must also be the struggle against the new NATO doctrine. The working class with its allies must stand up against militarization which is now pervading the whole social life of the various countries. Appropriate preparation is required as well as training in order to deal with the phenomena of violence and despotism, and of state and parastate terrorism against popular movements.

Today the Communist and Workers' parties, through our coordinated and common actions, must contribute in creating a new counterweight of the social and political forces that fight against the monopolies and imperialism.

In the same way, we must confront the effort to create a global rule that will supposedly impose order on capitalist anarchy, intracapitalist conflicts and competition. These plans will be presented during the 55th General Assembly of the United Nations in September of 2000, at the "Millennium Assembly" as they call it. Plans are also being made to pass the Multinational Agreement on Investments (MAI) through the back door in the new round of WTO negotiations.

Another problem, which is very urgent today, is dealing with the problems associated with the bad situation in which the trade union movement of the working class generally finds itself. Signs of recovery have begun to appear recently in some countries. Deepening the class character of the trade union movement under modern conditions is a matter of vital importance to the labor movement and to its alliances with other popular strata.

Within the framework of our efforts to encourage coordination and common action against the imperialist world order, we propose that a new meeting be held on the topic of world security and confronting the imperialist aggression that jeopardizes world peace.

Let us develop our immediate goals, comrades, and let us defend the future of our movement. □

JOIN THE PARADE MAY 1ST



CELEBRATING MAY DAY

Wally Kaufman

A new left-

center alliance is emerging
including the Party's leadership

Coming on the heels of the 400-strong Robeson Centennial Celebration in October, May Day in Cleveland shows a new, broad-based recognition of a need for the rebuilding of a strong political left, based on labor, including the Party's participation and leadership.

Millions of U.S. workers have been through militant confrontations with what they call "corporate greed," a phrase heard in every strike, every organizing drive. Class lines are growing sharper, and it is within this context that the Party works.

The Party must be an important, significant factor in rebuilding the trade unions, a process which is underway under the leadership of AFL-CIO president John Sweeney. This means being an integral part, in an organized manner, of every strike, organizing drive, workers' demonstration possible. This means having and

carrying out an industrial concentration policy on a national and district level, which enables the Party to select and mobilize around the most critical struggles workers are going through.

Mobilizing around struggles means, first of all, getting the *People's Weekly World* into the hands of thousands of workers, with stories of their hardships, their courage and determination, their "side of the story," in their confrontations with "corporate greed." It means using our paper, in combination with Party clubs, and working inside unions and community organizations, to build support and solidarity throughout organized labor and communities.

The Party, as an organization, together with the work of individual Communists and our press, is and has been for some time involved in mass struggles of workers and their

The successful 1999 annual May Day Celebration in Cleveland dramatized some very important new developments in our labor movement, which are the result of a combination of an intensifying class struggle, revitalized, more militant, trade union activity, and the work of the Party.

Wally Kaufman is the District Organizer of the CPUSA of Ohio.

unions. This involvement makes it possible to help workers draw lessons which sharpen their class consciousness.

Years of work in this regard has brought the Party and our press especially close to hundreds of steelworkers, steelworkers who have been through the most difficult, hard-fought strikes in the Ohio district. These steelworkers have responded with support for our paper and participation in our May Day celebrations for the past three years.

Each May Day has grown in the size and the breadth of participants. This year's celebration, together with the Robeson Centennial in October, shows our Party and press reaching out to an ever broader spectrum of activists, particularly in the trade unions.

For years the *PWW* has been distributed at meetings of Central Labor Councils and union offices in Ohio, particularly in Cleveland. These bodies are being re-energized and given new responsibilities in the "new labor movement." It is in the central labor bodies and their activities that you find the most active and politically advanced trade unionists. This is where you find trade union activists and leaders most receptive to the *PWW* and the party's leadership.

Without a doubt, readership of the *PWW* helps swell the growing crowds at our May Day events. Districts with-

out functioning press committees cannot give our paper the attention it needs. The Ohio-Pittsburgh Industrial Commission has served as our coordinating center for press work. In addition, we are setting up a press committee in Ohio, recognizing that much of what has been accomplished depended on an organized approach to the use of our paper.

Activists, organizers, and local leaders involved in Union Cities activities participated in Cleveland's May Day program, along with the president of the Ohio AFL-CIO.

Presentations were made regarding their particular activities, and several participants praised what they saw as a renewed, emerging political left. "I can't tell you how happy I am to see the left coming together once again," said one. "I come to Cleveland to talk with the left," said another.

The success of the May Day and Robeson events came about through a correct application of coalition tactics, as comrade Gus Hall has often called for in his reports. The cornerstone of all coalitions, the foundation on which all meaningful coalitions lie, is the left-center alliance within labor.

The Party has long held to the view that an alliance with the center is essential to any real, meaningful, long-term progress for our U.S. labor movement. What is new is that there are strong indications that important center forces see the need for an alliance with the left.

This does not mean there are no cross-currents in the opposite direction. Quite the contrary, inter-

vention by the bosses with divide-and-conquer tactics will always be present and will always have to be dealt with. But we should have full confidence that we are able to win the constant struggle for unity because we understand that the rising tide of class struggle is carrying the entire movement in the direction of higher levels of coalition relationships.

So we are witnessing an expanding, growing coalition between left and center, along with a consolidation of the left. These are the two hallmarks of our "new labor movement" which bode well for the future of organized labor and for the future of our Communist Party.

Rick Nagin wrote in a *PWW* article that "the multi-racial crowd was mostly trade-union activists" in Cleveland's May Day. In addition, it is important to note that the "crowd" was made up of mostly younger activists and union leaders. This is new and important, not only for rebuilding the organized labor movement, but also for building the Party. The challenge for us is to combine building the left within left-center coalitions with Party building.

A young participant in one of our clubs said, "this requires a higher standard for club life." It requires melding together club life with the lives and activities of our members, co-workers, and neighbors. Whole families need to be more involved.

On the district level, we need to do more in bringing our closest trade union friends, associates, and co-workers into our meetings. Discussion, planning, and mobilization around organizing, political action, coalition building, the role of the *PWW*, can all be part of these meetings. In addition, there needs to be serious consideration of classes with Marxist-Leninist theoretical content. An important beginning was the mid-west school in Ohio last summer.

From short one-subject classes to week-end outings combining discussion, study, and socials need to be considered. Whatever is done, the party needs a plan for party building. □



May Day demonstration 1936.



Phillip Bonosky | **Leader of the
Great Steel Strike, Communist
Party chairman, theorist and
historian, Foster's legacy spans
the century**

William Z. Foster: 20th Century Giant

William Foster was born in Taunton, Massachusetts, on Feb. 25, 1881, of immigrant parents, father James from Ireland and mother Elizabeth from a Scottish-English background. The "Z" was added later. His family later moved to Philadelphia where he spent his formative years. The young Foster started out like the millions of other immigrant children around the turn of the century, his body barely nourished but his mind drenched in religion. To feed his body and clear his mind of all superstition would be the ruling motifs of the rest of his life. From

the very beginning, he was plunged into the struggle to survive. It wasn't a matter of choice. It was either that or an early death, the fate of most of the boys of his class and social order. To live meant to fight, and to fight meant to understand that one was in a battle that distinguished from the start a clear line between enemy and friend.

Almost from the moment he could stand by himself on his wobbly legs, Foster was seemingly on his own. His first job was that of a news boy, and then he went through a series of others that scanned the working-class catalog of

employment, reaching a climax in his organizing and directing the steel strike of 1919. Even more important than his physical involvement in the working-class struggles of his times was his drive to probe into the reasons for poverty and oppression. With only a few years of formal schooling, he was very much self-educated. The times and world about him played a large role in his maturity. Having learned hardly more in school than how to recite the alphabet, the almost-illiterate Irish boy from the slums of Philadelphia grew to be a highly-educated worker/intellectual who was to write a number of books that had a remarkable influence on his generation and on those to follow.

Indeed, Foster was an intellectual of a new type, becoming its model and one who managed to liber-

ate himself from the reigning myths of his times. He eventually became a fully conscious worker-intellectual, aware of the laws that shaped and moved both society and the individuals in that society, a Marxist-Leninist in the full sense of that term.

It was a remarkable achievement but one that would be repeated the world over. There was hardly a concern for the liberation of the working class to which Foster did not make some contribution. At the core of his strong personality was the anchor that was his identity as a worker. At no time in his life did he feel tempted by middle-class values, ambitions, or goals. His casual attitude toward money alone disqualified him as the kind of American who judged all things by their stock market values. A poor man

Phillip Bonosky is a member of the editorial board of *PA*.



Foster with Henry Winston, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Eugene Dennis.

PWW file photo

throughout his life, Foster's wealth was only measured in riches beyond the reach of Wall Street moguls: his absolute identification with the destiny of the working class, becoming, in this sense, known, admired and respected by millions the world over.

Early on, he realized that fighting alone merely made him a victim. It was practically an instinct on his part to become part of a union in every job he had and if no union existed, to organize one. In these early struggles he developed a personal style that combined an informal approach to his fellow workers with a keen sense of what to do in any situation. He believed there was no problem faced by the workers that they couldn't solve. Finding the way to do it took patience, a cool head, a grip on one's emotions, and an irreducible need to know the truth, good or bad. He learned how to fight pessimism, defeatism, and probably even more than that, how to fight the lures that the ruling class dangled in front of the eyes of every young, promising leader that the working class produced. The history of unionism is strewn with the bodies of one-time militants, the active leaders whose weaknesses either had them give up in defeat and exhaustion or settle for some job, appointment, or position that was no more than a disguised bribe. Foster recognized them all, and he reserved his contempt for those who deserted the ranks of the militant

workers in a cloud of high-minded denunciations that merely hid their asking price.

Already a Socialist party member by 1904, Foster was anything but a card-carrying, passive, voting member. Whatever he believed in he put to the test of practice. Joining the union of his trade was an automatic act on his part moments after being hired. Joining the political party that best expressed his class needs followed just as automatically. Early on in 1900, it was the Socialist Party. But when his insistence that the Party – so to speak – put its money where its mouth was resulted in his being expelled, it did not end or even seriously hamper his activity. At different times, he was a member of the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and even organized an independent party of the left, the Wage Workers Party.

Above all and through all, he remained, in many respects, the typical rank-and-filer, never far from the union hall, always with his party or union card, always on the picket line, always in the thick of the battle, whether it was to organize the packinghouse workers into a union of their own, or in the struggle, with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, for the right to speak in Spokane, Washington. Though primarily an activist, Foster had early learned to ask why and not be content with any brush-off as an answer. He was an inveterate reader, devouring all the literature that dealt with the prime problems of the working class. And to whatever conclusions he came were put into print. Over his lifetime he authored over 200 magazine and newspaper articles, 80 or 90 pamphlets, and some 15 full-sized books, including his classic autobiographical work, *Pages From a*

Worker's Life and *The Great Steel Strike*, which remains a source book for that historic event and the key problems that rose from it.

It was in that steel strike of 1919 that Foster climaxed the first phase of his career. Organizing steel had been the goal not only of Foster's early career but the dream itself of an entire generation of class-conscious workers for whom that aim was like the Holy Grail. Monopoly steel was in the grip of the Morgan economic empire. Carnegie had sold his entire steel holdings, lock, stock and thousands of workers to Morgan in 1901. Morgan promptly set about eliminating every last vestige of unionism. Not only did he break their first strike attempted under his ownership, he instilled a system of physical and mental dominance enforced not only by the local police and the state militia when needed but by the company's own security forces known as the Coal-and-Iron police, which ruled wherever the workers lived. This was mainly in small company towns clustered about in such proximity to the mills that the workers felt as if they lived within them. Central to the system of control was a company spy network which existed clandestinely throughout the entire Morgan empire.

The Mill Gestapo came to know the habits of every worker, from the church he attended to the newspaper he read. Let drop a careless word and a company spy would pick it up. Your next pay would be your last pay, not only at that mill but throughout the entire system which now stretched to Chicago and in due course to California. The blacklist was a powerful weapon and it was ruthlessly employed against militant workers who were weeded out of the mills and even had to leave the area altogether for no jobs were available to them. If, as was often the case, their homes were mortgaged to the local bank, likely owned by the Morgan interests, they stood in jeopardy of losing them as well. It was conscious company policy to sell homes to its workers, thus keeping them bound by an added

fear of losing their property. Obeisance was that much easier to achieve.

In April, 1918, William Z. Foster, then a leading member of the Railway Carmen's Union, introduced a resolution before the Chicago Federation of Labor proposing an organizing drive in the steel industry. America was still at war. Foster had just ended a successful drive to organize the packing workers in Chicago. As secretary of the joint union body, the Stockyards Labor Council, he saw in the situation in steel a golden opportunity to organize, at long last, this key industry. If the rule of monopoly could be breached in steel, Foster figured, an historic road-block to organizing America's millions of unorganized workers in the basic industries would be removed. Beyond steel lay textiles, auto, rubber, electrical, marine, and dozens of others, which, if organized at all, were only minimally on a craft level. In 1918, most of America's industrial workers were unorganized. So steel was key.

But this was a formidable task. J. P. Morgan and his banking clique were dedicated to keeping the steelworkers unorganized. They considered unions a curse, an insolent incursion of mere workers on their right to decide policy for the corporate owners. In 1892, while Carnegie still owned most of the steel mills in the Pittsburgh area, the attempt of the craft workers at Homestead to revise some provisions of the contract they did have with the company was rebuffed by Carnegie and his chief deputy, Henry Frick. This resulted in the historic Homestead strike, which, though defeated as all strikes in steel had been, remained a milestone in the struggle of steelworkers for rights and freedom.

Foster was well aware of the history of the efforts of the steelworkers to organize and the main reasons why they had failed. Always the thinker, always the asker-of-why, he had early on located the key flaw in the strategic approach of many prior

union leaders in their fight against the entrenched monopolies. They saw unionization only in craft terms, which, in practice, excluded most of the workers. Foster grasped the fact that if the workers hoped to win, they would have to organize the entire working force from top to bottom. In essence, the workers would have to free themselves. They could not afford a situation in which part of the crafts-affected workers struck while others who were not directly affected kept on working and thus were actually scabbing.

Although not then, this view of things seems elementary today. The leaders of the craft-dominated American Federation of Labor, headed by the supreme opportunist Samuel Gompers, not only refused to believe that the steel workers could be organized, but, privately, in their hearts, did not want them to be organized, especially on an industrial basis. They suspected that if the huge masses of workers were once set in motion, no one could predict where the labor movement, now so tidily in control, might lead. After all, the Homestead strike had begun to assume some of the characteristics of the French commune, still, in 1892, a recent memory. Management, fearful of such an association called in the state militia to suppress any semblance of worker uprising.

Foster knew all this perhaps better than any man living at the time. But he also knew something else. He knew that the situation in steel had radically changed since the war in Europe began in 1914. Subjectively, the most important change had been in the mood of the workers. For years, America's steel mills, mainly concentrated around Pittsburgh, had been supplied with immigrants from



James Ford and William Foster ran for vice-president and president respectively on the CP ticket, placing the Party among the first to have a Black/white ticket.

Europe, largely from Eastern Europe, and drawn not from the working class but from the peasantry. There was method in the system employed by the corporate owners in choosing whom they would hire. Largely free of radical or working class ideas, the peasants were considered safe. They did not take to organization with the same spontaneity of the workers. Their ambitions were to become owners themselves and they were used to working from sun-up to sun-down. They brought their national animosities with them to America and into the mills. Thirty-two ethnic minorities in the mill meant there were 32 groups at war with each other, unable to understand or speak the others' language, and taught to see in the others not friends but enemies and rivals. The peasants, feeling alien and at bay in America, dreamed of saving enough money to return home and buy their own plots of land.

Such men presented a formidable obstacle to organization. Native-born Americans, like Foster, were taught, by absorption, a sense of superiority over the foreign born, and as expected, African Americans, of whom only a small minority ever got jobs in the steel mills until late in the '20s. Most of the better jobs in the mills, as well as most of the adminis-

trative positions in the city administration – especially with the police – went to those immigrants who could speak English. This turned out to be mainly the Irish, followed by the Scots and others from England. The average pidgin-speaking workers in the steel mills before WW I faced a wall of English-speaking bosses, from the foreman, directly over him, to the main executives with offices in Pittsburgh.

To understand the problem from a revolutionary point of view took enormous insight and imagination, familiarity with the ins and outs of the situation and complete identification with the workers on a class basis. Foster was blessed with these virtues and he was able to see in those pidgin-speaking semi-illiterate immigrant workers ground down by poverty and round-the-clock schedules future supporters of unionization.

A typical mill was a Tower of Babel. It was quite possible that you could not understand the man who worked next to you. Still, your very life often depended on his understanding you, and a system of communication spontaneously took form that was a kind of basic English liberally peppered with words and phrases from one of the foreign languages, supplemented by a well-developed sign language.

The workday was 12 hours long and the week was seven days long. On the day when workers switched from daylight to night work, a device to discourage fraternization, they worked 24 hours without a break. The wages were extremely low – quite literally one man's pay was not enough to feed, clothe and shelter a family of five, with families tending to be large. Working conditions were hazardous and unhealthy and the rate of death and accident was high. In Allegheny County alone one could expect 25 percent of the workers ending up in the hospital or the graveyard. For years, the company towns grouped around Pittsburgh seemed to be populated with men who had no legs or hands or arms, were blind, had

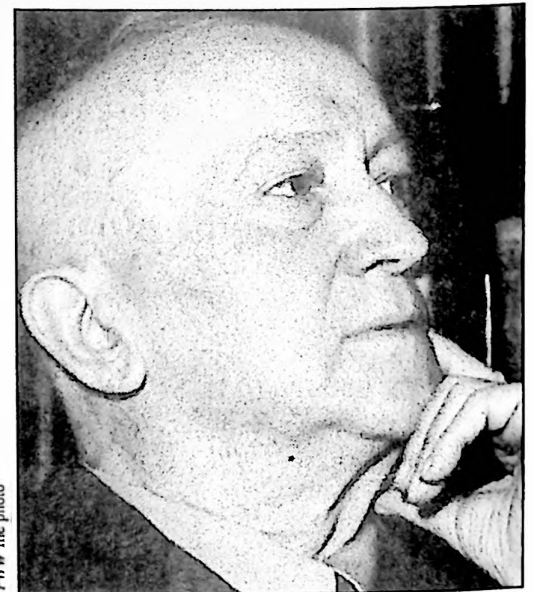
their faces caved in, or who ended up victims of pneumonia or other respiratory diseases. Compensation for injury if company complicity could be proven was ludicrously low. In fact, the companies didn't have to pay compensation at all in most states. Pensions after years of unbroken labor in the mills were rudimentary. If a service record was broken for any reasons, i. e. layoffs, strikes, or illness, pension rights were lost as well.

Attempts to strike against these conditions had occurred before but had always been defeated. The 1914 war stopped the flow of European immigrants and by 1917, with America in the war and in need of soldiers, the mills started losing workers. In fact, the need became acute, especially as the production of armaments increased, and the corporate heads resorted to every means of getting workers, including raising the wages somewhat, although the average was still 42-44 cents an hour for common labor, and the hiring for the first time of African Americans who had been, for the most part, kept out of the mills and the unions.

For the first time in their history, the steelworkers found themselves in an advantageous position vis-a-vis the employers. Mills were booming and enormous fortunes were being made by the Morgan financial moguls. Foster saw a golden, historic opportunity to strike at this industry at its weakest link: the war-induced shortage of labor. He could expect that if the workers walked out, the company would find it extremely difficult to bring in scabs. True, he would be charged with being unpatriotic, even an agent of the German Kaiser. A senatorial investigative committee was set up to investigate the strike. This started out by accusing him of being a German agent but ended up of being a Bolshevik. In any case, the die was cast. The call went out and before the strike ended on January 2, 1920, some 365,000 work-

ers struck in 50 cities and 10 states. This was the first big strike against a monopoly-controlled industry, nationwide, and indeed in the world. In the eyes of the corporation heads, it was the opening gun of red revolution, directly imitating the Bolsheviks in Russia. During its course – a little over three months – some 20 workers were killed outright by the company thugs, in and out of uniform, dozens were beaten, and hundreds arrested. Altogether, a million and a half people, including women and children, starved and suffered bitterly before the strike ended.

Among the most heroic of the victorious strikers were those erstwhile despised foreigners, the workers of Eastern Europe, whom AFL president, Samuel Gompers, despised. This low opinion of the workers led Gompers to believe he could give Foster enough rope with which he would hang himself.



Gompers paid lip-service to the strike but in fact sabotaged it at every stage. Until inevitably failing, Gompers figured it would not only remove Foster as a threat to trade-union bureaucrats but would confirm his personal belief that concessions from monopoly could be won only by judicious negotiations between union and corporation heads meeting cordially in pri-

vate rooms.

In his subsequent book, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons*, Foster subjected the whole historic episode to an unflinchingly honest analysis, creating in the process a classic document of its kind. He summed the experience up as marking a great advance in trade-union methods and practices. It is true that the unions in the campaign made many mistakes; they quarreled seriously among themselves, and put forth only a substituted group of 24



PWW file photo

unions for individual action in other campaigns. But they also established a standard initiation fee instead of the variables that existed before and adopted modern methods of organizing in place of the antiquated system previously prevailing. A joint commissariat had formed that carried on a successful organizing campaign and waged a great strike together. Tremendous forward strides had been made.

He pointed out that one of the main weaknesses of the strike was the artificially induced antagonism between native and foreign-born workers, between white and Black, and among entrenched union bureaucrats who undermined the efforts of the strike leadership. There was as well the interference of the Catholic Church into union affairs. The strike

had to be waged in a context of almost universal public hostility. All the newspapers were not only opposed to the strike; they worked hard to create an atmosphere of crisis charging Foster with aiming to take over the mills in a revolutionary uprising. The strikers were also attacked nationally, being subjected to senatorial inquiry and to the attacks of the Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, who, with his young and still aspiring assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, launched a series of raids against not only strikers but also all known or suspected militants who were illegally arrested, held incommunicado in bull pens like cattle, and some eventually deported. It was during this strike that Mayor Crawford of Duquesne coined the classic answer of capitalist power to the demands of its workers, in this instance, for the right of Foster and others of his organizers to speak in Duquesne: Jesus Christ himself could not speak in Duquesne for the A. F. of L.

Some 15 years later, when the steel workers, now part of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) again attempted to get into Duquesne to organize the workers, the same Mayor Crawford let them know who and what the law was.. Earlier, during the steel strike, the *Donora Herald* had cried: "Wm. Z. Foster seems determined to have that little revolution if he has to get out and start one himself. About the best remedy for that bird would be one of those old-fashioned hangings." Although quite inflammatory words, all the physical violence originated and was carried out by the employers through their agents and sometimes directly by their mill police.

The steel strike, although the highlight of his life to that point, proved to be only one experience in the many that were to follow and he saw this as a preparation for his ultimate political move which was to join the Communist Party. As a Party leader Foster would run for president of the United States breaking, with

James Ford, an entire series of taboos, chief of which was to run a Black man for a national political office. He engaged in many campaigns and issues but probably nothing exceeded his role in the bitter inner-Party struggle against the revisionism of Earl Browder that was introduced during World War II. It was Browder's thesis that the wartime cooperation among the chief allies – the U.S. Great Britain and the USSR – was no mere wartime accommodation but marked a profound change in the relationship of forces on a world basis, with the USSR now playing a leading role, and, just as important, marking a change in the nature of world imperialism. Britain could no longer function as of old, and the U.S. said Browder – would not. Cooperation on an equal basis would be the watchword. The coalition that had won the war would continue to win the race. So ran the lyrics.

Foster did not agree, and led the fight against Browder's line and the theoretical distortions it was based upon. The fight was bitter, long and, in its own way, without compromise. No prisoners were taken. In the end Browder's thesis was defeated first by the Party members and then, very quickly, by life itself as intimations of the first moves in what would become the Cold War began to appear, especially after the death of FDR.

The struggle was on. The virus of revisionism running deep became the ideological reflection of the influx of middle-class forces into the movement of the working class, sometimes remaining recessive, and at critical moments coming out openly and making its bid for leadership. The next struggle that engaged all of Foster's resources, both physical and mental, came with the inner-party crisis of the '50s associated with the name of John Gates who was then editor of the *Daily Worker* and a member of the National Committee of the CPUSA. Again the thesis was

the same. In essence it was charged that the old Leninist party had outlived itself, had outmoded its relevance, and that the new alignment of forces in the world demanded a similar adjustment in the Party of the working class.

To this thesis Foster raised cogent objections and insisted that while changes had indeed occurred and workers had to study them closely, the most profound change of all and the one that mattered most to the oppressed the whole world over, did not occur. At its core, capitalism remained the same, enormously magnified where America was concerned, making it the most powerful imperial-

ist nation in history.

Gates' under-nourished ideas could not withstand the reality of life itself, any more than Browder's could. Although their ideas would never entirely die, they would fade away, as a direct influence within the ranks of the Party. But the struggle cost Foster dearly. It was in the middle of a fierce debate at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Party that he was stricken with a stroke, and from that moment on his life became a valiant struggle to overcome its crippling effects. He was to die in Moscow (1961) where, after being refused a visa by a vindictive government for

many years, he had finally been able to go for treatment.

His life deserves much study and, indeed, several biographical books have already been written and there are more to come even from friendly enemies who cannot abide the fact that this man, totally incorruptible and totally dedicated to the working class. In one of his songs, Marc Blitzstein called Foster the purest kind of a guy. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, even the existence of one such rebel is intolerable. It shakes their confidence and is an undying message that their days are indeed numbered and that the working class will yet be the human race. □

continued from page 3

be on Comrade Gus Hall's article, "Marxism-Leninism: Science for Our Times."

The subsequent topics for discussion can be from the suggested list of ideological questions and topics put together by the Pre-Conference Discussion Committee that National Board members will be opening on each week. These openings will be printed in the *People's Weekly World* and/or *Political Affairs*. Or it can be some other topic that interests the members of the club.

Your club presentations can be turned into articles that can be submitted for publication in the *PWW* (880 word limit) or *PA* (3000 word limit). Your submissions should be addressed to the Chair of the committee, John Bachtell at 235 W. 23rd St. New York, NY 10011 or e-mail jbachtell@cpusa.org.

PROPOSED TOPICS:

1. Why have we adopted the concept "Bill of Rights Socialism, USA." What are the ideological points we can make to win people's minds and hearts?

2. Explain the main characteristics of the two opposing ideologies in today's world. What are some new features?

3. What are the new ideological expressions of globalization, monopolization and privatization and that affect the new stage of imperialism? Is war a greater or lesser danger today?

4. How do we explain that Marxism-Leninism is a science, the science of the working class. Why do we say that Marxism-Leninism is a living, expanding, deepening body of thought that has to change in order to grow

5. What are some of the new features of ruling-class ideology?

6. What are the new features of the radicalization process and how do they reflect themselves in mass ideological thought patterns?

7. What is the relationship between reform and revolution?

8. How is the ideological struggle manifested in ruling class (bourgeois) culture?

9. What is the ideological foundation of the ideology of racism? What are the new developments, the new features, of racism, chauvinism, anti-Semitism and nationalism?

10. What ideological arguments do we make for placing such great emphasis on the struggle against racism, for equality and justice?

11. What are the new obstacles in the fight for Black, Brown, white unity?

12. What are the new features and manifestations of anti-Communism?

13. Discuss the concept of the inevitability of socialism. How do we

handle challenges to this concept in the context of the crisis in socialism?

14. What are the new challenges to the concept of the leading role of the working class? What are the ideological obstacles to industrial concentration and an emphasis on the working class?

15. What are the ideological challenges to the concept of a mass party?

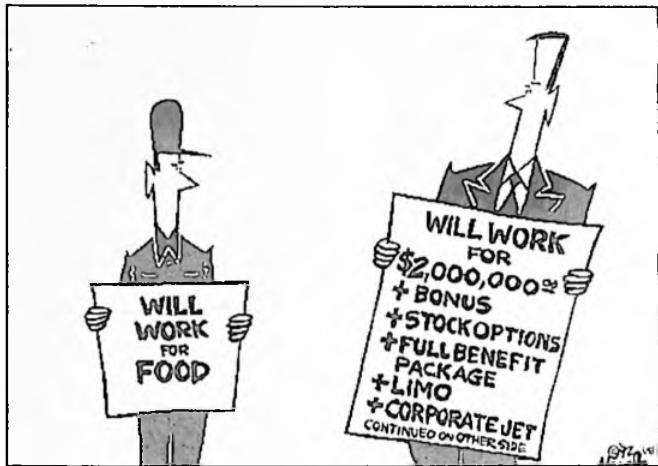
16. What are the main features of our new, mass, revolutionary Communist Party, USA? What is the Party's role in today's new conditions?

17. What is the difference between ideology and tactics?

8. In popular terms, what do we mean by the dialectical method of thinking?

19. What do we mean by left-center unity? Left-Center-Communist unity? What is the ideological direction of the trade union movement today? □

FROM BOOM TO BUST: What's Behind the Capitalist Economic Cycle



Introduction:

My book *Unstable Economy* was published in 1978, the peak year of real wages. Below is a chapter from that book originally entitled "Why Cycles." Following was a prolonged serious downturn in real wages – continuing to this day with only temporary and partial cyclical upturns and accompanied by declining trade union membership and influence which is changing now under new leadership.

Rereading it, I find the book still relevant and I believe it makes a significant contribution to understanding the U.S. economy.

It is important to consider however, the world-shaking developments that have since 1973 increased the global instability of capitalism.

First was the tragic betrayal by Gorbachev and Yeltsin which overthrew socialism in the Soviet Union and broke up the country; the ensuing capitalist counterevolution with its long-term destruction of the economies of Russia and other Soviet Republics. The unprecedented and rapid industrialization and economic growth of the USSR proved the superiority of socialism over capitalism. The almost immediate drastic consequences of the counterevolution gives stark proof of the inferiority of

Vic Perlo

The boom of

the last several years can't last.

The bust is coming. Its inevitable.

Are you ready?

capitalism. Indeed this disastrous situation can no more be sustained than would have been a triumph of the slave system over the capitalist system in the American Civil War.

On the world scene, the downfall of socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe wiped out the major balancing factor in international affairs.

This loss has enabled U.S. imperialism to extend military and economic domination over a large part of the world and to exercise this power more and more arrogantly and brashly, most immediately in Yugoslavia; in the eastward expansion of NATO; in the drive to conquer the Caspian sea and its oil.

U.S. military domination has been a major factor in the outbreak of the most devastating economic crisis of world capitalism since

the 1930s, directly affecting the majority of the world's peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America and now spreading to Japan and, less sharply West European NATO countries.

The United States, but not its working class, racially oppressed and senior citizens, is so far immune from the crisis – shielded in part by its plunder from the rest of the world. But the contradictions mount and will eventually make the U.S. a prime victim of the global crisis.

These events greatly complicate the world and U.S. economies. The analysis of economic factors in *Why Cycles* is still valid. It provides a valuable platform from which the interpretation of the more complicated economy of today can be launched.

Vic Perlo is a member of the national board of CPUSA.

Capitalism is a system based on private ownership of the means of production, and wage labor. Profits, the object of capitalist enterprise, derive from the difference between the values produced by labor and the wages paid to labor. Typically, the daily wages are less than half the values created. Marx called the difference "surplus

CAPITALISM SUCKS.



value" and the process of its creation the exploitation of labor. This term is often used in the United States to signify payment of substandard wages. However, here we use the term "exploitation" in the Marxist sense, applying to all wage and salary earners, including most of those who are relatively well paid.

Surplus value is divided into various kinds of property income, some disguised: dividends, interest, rent, undivided corporate profits, profits of unincorporated enterprises, inflated salaries, bonuses and expense accounts for corporate officials and executives; excessive depreciation and other "cash flow" items; fees paid to bankers, lawyers, and other "insiders." Part of sur-

plus value also goes to pay taxes. The "net income publicly reported by most large corporations covers only a minor fraction of the total surplus value extracted from their workers' labor.

In contrast to the private nature of ownership, the process of production is social. In many instances, thousands and thousands of workers are employed by a single corporate entity, and the products of their labor are marketed throughout the capitalist world. This represents a decisive difference from earlier systems of exploitation feudalism and slavery in which production was largely individual and products were consumed locally.

The capitalist's production objective is the expansion of his capital. As Marx put it, "It will never do, therefore, to represent capitalist production as something which it is not, namely, as production whose immediate purpose is enjoyment or the manufacture of the means of enjoyment for the capitalist." Certainly, the capitalists do not stint on their living standards. But their main aim is to "save" their profits and reinvest them so that they can become still bigger capitalists. The psychological (and subjective) motivation is the greed of the capitalists. A man has to be greedy to succeed as a capitalist and even to survive. For, throughout the history of this system the smaller capitalist has been swallowed up by the larger, and this has

never been more true than today. Either he is "greedy" and clever enough at it to exploit his workers massively, reinvesting his profits so that he can exploit still more workers, or he will soon stop being a capitalist and himself become an exploited worker. In present-day American terms, either he will conglomerate or be conglomerated.

It is especially important to bear this in mind today when there has developed so much propaganda about U.S. capitalism as a "consumer society," about the "consumer being king," etc. Anybody who has had any practical dealings with top executives of major corporations knows that this is utter nonsense — that the object of business is to make a profit and to use that profit to make more profit. Period.

We have said that the object of production is surplus value and that this is created in the process of production. The finished goods that emerge from the factory door contain the quantity of surplus value represented by the amount of exploitation of the workers in that factory.

Capital, (says Marx) has absorbed so and so much unpaid labor. Now, comes the second act of the process. The entire mass of commodities must be sold. If this is not done, or done only in part, or only at prices below the prices of production, the laborer has been indeed exploited, but his exploitation is not realized as such for the capitalist. The conditions of direct exploitation and those of realizing it are not identical.

They diverge not only in place and time, but also logically Marx uses the term "realization" to signify the process of selling and collecting the money for the product.

Every practical person knows this simple truth. Indeed, companies making whole lines of products, from computers to pharmaceuticals, spend much more money trying to sell the goods than they do to produce them.

But the modern capitalist economists, beginning with Keynes, and more especially his postwar followers, systematically ignore it. They draw up economic models in which the amount of income saved equals the amount invested, etc. This false harmony in the accounts makes it impossible to understand the causes of crisis and impossible to estimate accurately the effects of government policies designed to influence the course of economic development.

Marx goes on to expand on his statement of the "divergence" of the amount of goods produced and the amount sold. The amounts produced "are only limited by the productive power of society," the amounts sold "by the proportional relation of the various branches of production and the consumer power of society." Now if everybody spent every cent of his share of the values produced, production would balance. But consuming power is not determined either by the absolute productive power, or by the absolute consumer power, but by the consumer power based on antagonistic condi-

tions of distribution, which reduce the consumption of the bulk of the society to a minimum varying within more or less narrow limits.

To make maximum profits, the employers seek to hold wages down as much as possible and to increase the intensity of labor, that is, to get more product out of each hour of labor. But that tends to reduce the share of workers in the revenues produced, to prevent their consuming power from increasing as fast as the value of goods produced. The capitalists, for their part, do not increase personal consumption in line with their increasing share of production because of their "greed for an expansion of capital." This contradiction between the tendencies of production and consumption prevents the full potential of production and of employment from being realized over a prolonged period.

It is no contradiction at all on this self-contradictory basis that there should be an excess of capital simultaneously with a growing surplus of population. For while a combination of these two would, indeed, increase the mass of produced surplus-value, it would at the same time intensify the contradiction between the conditions under which this surplus value is produced and those under which it is realized.

This is recognized by modern capitalist economists who disdain Marx and who do not recognize the relations of exploitation which give rise to the contradiction. For example, Keynes defines effective

demand as equaling the aggregate income that capitalists expect to receive and pay out to their workers based on the number of workers they intend to hire. This number does not correspond to their full capacity, but "to the level of employment which maximizes the entrepreneur's expectation

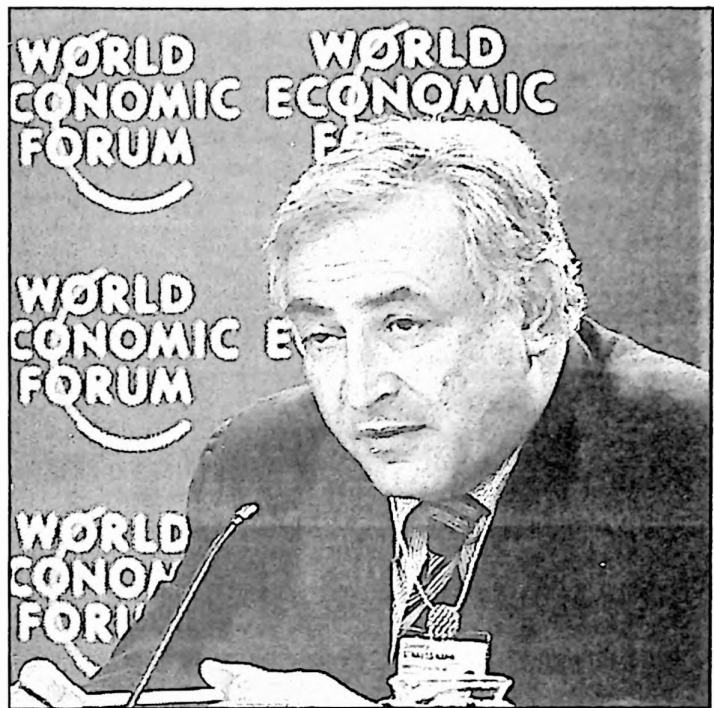


AP photo

of profit." Similarly, Washington economists strive to regulate the economy so as to achieve the "ideal" rate of unemployment four or five per cent depending on the time period and the economist, as being most suited to economic stability and maximum profits.

RATE OF PROFIT & OVERPRODUCTION ■

During the boom phase of the cycle, overproduction of capital and of commodities generally creeps up in disguise, so to speak. On the surface, demand is brisk; there are even shortages of particular labor skills. Yet disturbing things happen. "Air-holes" appear in the economy and on the stock market. More and more companies complain of a "profit squeeze." And this



AP photo

From rags to riches: Last year's cyclical crises devastated Latin American and Asian economies leaving Western imperialist economies relatively untouched.



AP photo

efficient to yield the same rate of profit on all this new fixed capital as has been obtained on the older, less expensive machinery and equipment. This is a crude example of the operation of the law of the declining tendency of the rate of profit. This law is fundamental to the cyclical process as well as to longer-range problems of capitalism.

hits from several directions. During the whole period of revival and boom, attempts to cut costs and increase productivity and the scale of production led to the introduction of new, more expensive, labor-saving equipment, huge power installations, and other capital-intensive "infrastructures." But the expansion of the market has not been suf-

By the time the recovery has reached boom level, unemployment is at a comparatively low level. Workers are unafraid to strike, while employers fear the loss of profitable business opportunities. Organized workers win substantial wage increases. In many cases employers voluntarily raise wages of unorganized workers to ensure an adequate supply of labor, especially in the

skilled trades. The higher wages increase the demand for consumers goods but not enough to take up all the flood of goods that can be turned out in the new, expanded and improved industrial plants.

Shortages of particular raw materials cause their prices to soar, and this cannot be fully offset at the processing level. In the modern corporate economy, all of the partly parasitic "overhead" expenses from advertising to executive expense-account living get out of line. Attempted price increases do not stick, or, the increases cannot keep up with the rise in costs.

Gradually, profit declines hit more and more companies, and even whole industries. In modern capitalist analytic language, the "diffusion index" for profits declines, that is, a larger percentage of corporations show a declining trend of profits even before the total profits of all corporations turn downward.

At a certain point in this development, the lack of adequate markets becomes apparent, at least in key industries. The "profit squeeze" and slackening markets reinforce one another. The difficulties become sufficiently general to cause many capitalists to hesitate to make new investments since they doubt the possibility of obtaining an adequate rate of profit on them. The total level of new capital investment declines; this is the decisive signal of a crisis situation.

All of these interacting phenomena are varying reflections of the contradictions built into the capitalist

system of production a system where the object of production is the profits obtained through exploitation of wage labor; a system

where the profits exist potentially in commodities produced by the workers but have to be converted into money, the "real" symbol of profit, through sale on a market, but the market cannot be coordinated in its pattern or absolute size with the scale of production; furthermore, a crucial part of the market reflects in a

reverse mirror the rate of exploitation of labor. The more the latter expands, increasing the potential profit, the more the former contracts in relative size, preventing the full realization of that profit and its full conversion into money.

Sooner or later these contradictions are temporarily resolved in a crisis. This leads to the destruction of the value of part of the capital through bankruptcy, distress sale, or price mark-downs. And a considerable amount of capital is physically destroyed as plants are shut down permanently and the surplus stocks of some commodities are destroyed by government agencies or cartels of producers. With the total capital reduced by more, relatively, than the total profit, at some point the rate of profit is restored, production stabilizes, and conditions are created for the next upward phases of the business cycle.

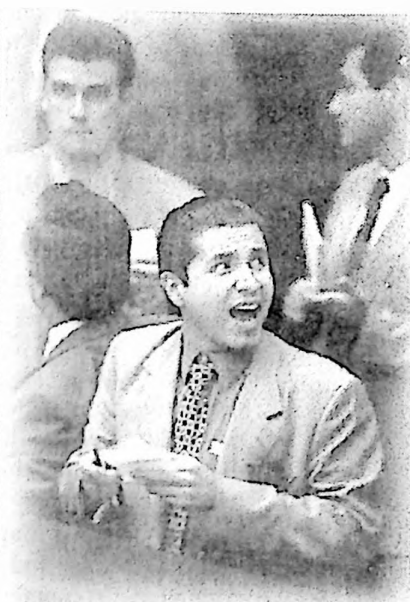
A mere "adjustment" isn't enough; the crisis has to be sharp enough to result

in bankruptcies and the destruction of capital values. Otherwise the rate of profit cannot be restored on the remaining capital.

Marx called them crises of overproduction because they appear as an overproduction of capital, as



Globalization today means A cyclical downturn of the Brazilian, Mexican or the Japanese (right and below) economies could devastate the U.S. and precipitate global depression.



overcapacity, overstocking of goods, etc. Not overproduction in any absolute sense, but overproduction for the objective of capitalist production maximum profit.

And here are some eloquent words that express the theoretical essence of Marx's analysis and, at the same time, the social significance of the capitalist cycle: There are not too many necessities of life produced, in proportion to the existing population. Quite the reverse. Too little is produced to decently and humanely satisfy the wants of the great mass. There are not too many means of production produced to employ the able-bodied portion of the population. Quite the reverse... On the other hand, too many means of labor and necessities of life are produced at times to permit of their serving as means for the exploitation of laborers at a certain rate of profit... too many to permit the consummation of this process without constantly recurring explosions. Not too much wealth is produced. But at times too much wealth is produced in its capitalistic, self-contradictory forms.

Talk of absolute surpluses of foodstuffs in the wealthy United States seems callous when we are confronted by the evidence of mass malnutrition and even hunger among tens of millions of people. And talk of overproduction of machinery falls flat when we are confronted with the mass unemployment of millions of ghetto youth, of millions more in Appalachia and other depressed areas of the country, even in "good times." And yet, "crisis of

overproduction", is the correct phrase if we keep in mind that we are dealing with the concept "overproduction from the viewpoint of capitalism, from the viewpoint of making profits." A summation of the very essence of the question is here given by Marx: The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit.

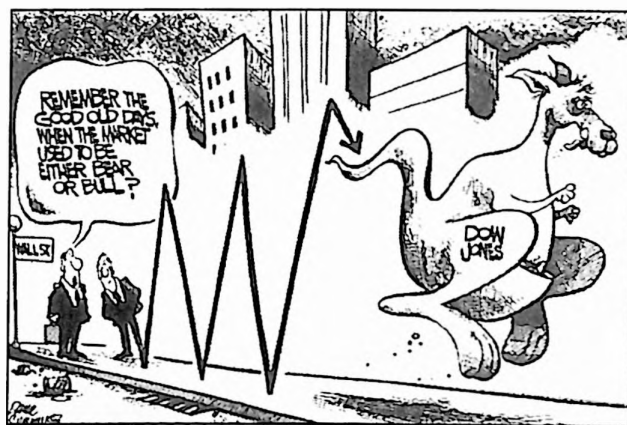
TRICKLE-DOWNERS ■

Well, say some economists, the solution is simple. Increase wages and other mass incomes, and all the goods can be sold at a reasonable profit. These economists, called under-consumptionists, consider only one side of the question. Quite aside from the invariable resistance of the capitalists, who do not care about their arguments, the increase in mass purchasing power is a two-sided weapon. The purchasing power of workers is a cost of production to the capitalists. An increase in that purchasing power means a cut in his rate of exploitation of labor. At the peak of the boom, writes Marx, "The working class actively reinforced by its entire reserve army, also enjoys momentarily articles of luxury ordinarily out of its reach, articles which at other times constitute for the greater part 'necessities' only for the capitalist class..." He directly takes up the argument of the

under-consumptionists, who say that the crises result because "the working class receives too small a portion of their own product and the evil would be remedied as soon as it receives a larger share of it and its wages increase in consequence." To them, he says: One could only remark that crises are always prepared by precisely a period in which wages rise generally and the working class actually gets a larger share of that part of the annual product which is intended for consumption. From the point of view of these advocates of sound and "simple" (!) common sense, such a period should rather remove the crisis. It

those who are direct spokesmen for big capital, say the solution to crises is simple. Hold down wages, and do everything to give more "incentive" to capital. Then there will be a constantly rising flow of investment, well-being will trickle down from those on top to those below, increasing jobs and everybody's prosperity. This Simple Simon argument, self-serving to the capitalists' interests, collapses when applied. Because then the rapidly rising production capacity comes into the most glaring contradiction with the consuming power of the masses, deliberately kept stagnant in order to increase the rate of profit.

The "New Era" of the 1920s in the United States



appears, then, that capitalist production comprises conditions independent of good or bad will, conditions which permit the working class to enjoy that relative prosperity only momentarily, and at that always only as a harbinger of a coming crisis.

Nowadays, in fact, the capitalists blame crises on rising wages, but the blame is in the system that causes crises, be wages high or low, rising or falling. The most reactionary economists,

gave that argument its test. Labor productivity soared; profits soared. Everything boomed except wages, which stayed virtually unchanged. And the ensuing crash was the worst in history.

The fact is there is no combination of industrial and labor practices and policies which can avert the accumulation of contradictions that lead to cyclical development. Government policies, as we shall see, can influence the timing and

course of the cycle, but cannot exorcise it.

Marxists describe four phases of the economic cycle: crisis, depression, recovery, and boom. Capitalist economists describe pretty much the same phases, but in different language. Samuelson uses the terms contraction, revival, expansion, peak.

The Marxist terminology is more vivid and more precisely reflects the character of cyclical development. Marx saw each crisis as the start of a new cycle. It is a violent cathartic – a temporary cure for the contradictions of the economy. By an enforced economic retreat it creates a new balance, from which economic activity can again expand: This phase of a cycle is characterized by overproduction of commodities which cannot find outlets, by a sharp fall in prices, by an acute shortage of means of payment and by stock exchange crashes which bring in their train mass bankruptcy, a sharp curtailment of production, a growth in unemployment, and a fall in wages. The fall in the prices of commodities, unemployment, direct destruction of machinery, equipment, and entire works – all this means a tremendous destruction of society's productive forces. Through the ruin and collapse of a large number of concerns and the destruction of part of the productive forces, the crisis forcibly adapts, and that within a very short time, the magnitude of production to the magnitude of effective demand.

Not all of these things happen in every crisis, but most of them do. In the most recent crisis in the United States, for example, the fall in the prices of commodities was limited to raw materials and only real wages fell, not money wages.

During the depression phase, industrial production stagnates, trade is sluggish, there is an abundance of spare money capital. Excess inventories are partly destroyed and partly sold off at reduced prices. Capitalists try to cut costs in every way, especially by increasing the exploitation of labor. They push workers harder, using

the threat of unemployment. Sometimes they are able to enforce wage cuts. They institute technical improvements and labor-saving equipment to increase labor productivity and restore profits even with prices below their peaks.

This renewal of machinery stirs up production in the machinery and metal industries. Workers in these areas increase the demand for consumer goods. So do the gradually increasing number of government workers and those in service industries. Thus conditions are created for a transition to economic recovery. During the recovery phase, production passes its previous peak and gradually gathers momentum. Inventories are rebuilt; capitalists begin to expand again; new plants are constructed; new foreign markets penetrated. Prices start upward and credit begins to expand. The pace of recovery quickens – in the boom period there is a surface appearance of all-around prosperity. Predictions of permanent good times abound; the stock market soars dizzily. But, beneath the surface, conditions for the next crisis are fast ripening. There are fewer and fewer really new opportunities for investment. More and more individual enterprises run into trouble. Capitalists, squeezed out of production, turn more and more to speculation – wild real-estate ventures and the purchase of stocks at prices that “discount not only the future, but the hereafter.” More and more things are going on credit. Capitalists borrow to stock up raw materials before prices go still higher. Speculators borrow to play the market. Workers borrow to buy goods promising a modicum of comfort. Money becomes “tight,” interest rates soar. So do prices. Capacity again has gotten far ahead of effective demand. The contradictions are temporarily hidden by the stretching of credit to the last notch, by the last big expansions of investment, by the new peaks on the stock market, by rising production that goes into inventories but not to final buyers.

But sooner or later the “bubble bursts.” A new crisis breaks out, and the cycle starts all over again.

This is a rough sketch. Every cycle has its individual features. All cycles of the past several decades have been influenced by government economic regulation and increasingly so. But the fundamental contradictions remain in force; the cycle retains its historic general shape, as described so graphically by Engels nearly 100 years ago: As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and production are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filters off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter, in turn, grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which, finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described it first as “crises ple horique,” a crisis from plethora. □

Poetry Notebook

Children's Jail

(There is a children's jail
which I pass everyday
riding on the 2 train
down to Manhattan way)

There is a children's jail
I see everyday
from the dirty window
of the number 2 subway

There is a children's jail
that I pass everyday
A pretty, new, brick structure
complete in everyday

Equipped with bright and shiny things
to fill their eyes delight
like shiny, curled barbed wire
and lots of bright search lights

High guard towers to watch them
run and grow and play
on brand new painted courts
with hoops that always stay

There is a children's jail
which pens up hopes and dreams
A system that invents this
makes you wonder what it means

When so few have so much
and cannot spend it all
while workers' children
go without, someday it will fall

There is a children's jail
my kids see everyday
They always have a question
and this is what I say

"The mean guys build 'em,
stealing money from the schools."
How else can you explain?
Thank god I have the tools

There is a children's jail
which makes me just so sick I want to puke
How can we stand this system
which treats us all like
crooks/kooks?

There is a children's jail
across the street from M.S. 33
and it's "field of dreams", a track,
with words of inspiration
painted for kids to see

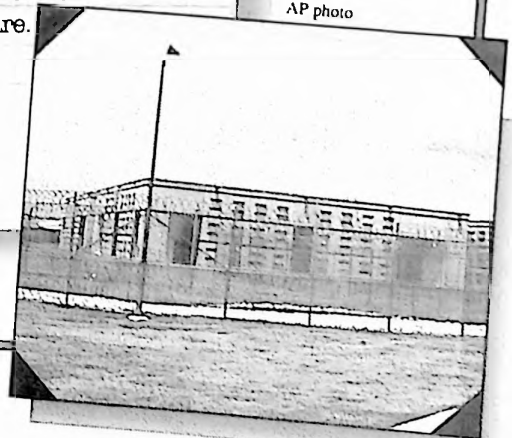
I noticed they're not done
building the "juvie" pen
because the Burger King adjacent
is not yet open.

They really gave it thought
to put some fast food there
for all who come to visit
will eat a burger fare.

Terrie
Albano is a
member of the
National
Board of the
Communist
Party.

Terrie
Albano

AP photo

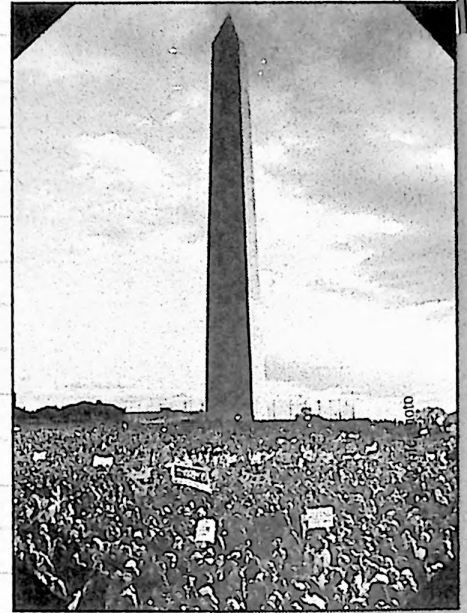


When I Grew Up

"When I Grew Up" by Julia Stein was published in *Under the Ladder to Heaven*, West End Press, 1984.

I was the girl who loved
my soldier uncle in Korea
My best gifts came from the war:
a furry white teddy bear,
blue thongs, a red Japanese doll
I wanted to marry a soldier when I grew
up.

I was the girl shocked by
the burnt flesh in Vietnam,
marched for years against the war,
saw cops with shotguns on the rooftops,
tear gas rain out of the sky.
Still, I was the girl who believed
they'd never shoot at us.
that afternoon they shot at us
was when I grew up.



PWW file photo



PWW file photo

Julia Stein

The Strike

The idle factory came to seem strange
A silence in the plant, a distance,
between machine and man, as if a thread had been cut,
between two planets, an absence
of human hand that use up time
making things, and the naked room without work and without noise.

When man deserted the lairs
of the turbine, when he tore off
the arms of the fire, so that the inner organs
of the furnace died, and pulled out the eyes
of the wheel, so that the dizzy light
paused in its invisible circle,
the eyes of great energies,
of the pure circles of force,
of the stupendous power,
what remained was a heap of pointless pieces of steel,
and in the shops without men a widowed air
and the lonesome odor of oil,
Nothing existed without that fragment,
hammering, without Ramirez,
without the man in the torn overalls,
Nothing was left but the hides of the engines,
heaps of power gone dead,
like black whales in the polluted
depths of a sluggish sea
or mountain ranges,
suddenly drowned
under the loneliness of outer space.

Pablo Neruda was
a Chilean
Communist poet
who won the
Nobel prize in
1971. He died in
1973.



AP photo



AP photo

translated by Robert Bly

– Pablo Neruda

Gerald Horne

How fascist ele-

ments in Washington continue to undermine democracy and conspire to bring down the presidency

Danger on the Right

For at least a decade U.S. imperialism has been prating about how it strides the world like a latter-day Colossus, the so-called “sole remaining super-power.” The murderous bombing of Serbia by U.S.-led NATO forces and the destruction of China’s Embassy in Belgrade were meant to signal that imperialist hegemony should not be contested.

Still, worrisome signals have begun to emerge indicating that Washington and Wall Street are not as confident about their position as their rhetoric might indicate.

A new book spelling danger of the right, *Betrayal: How the Clinton Administration undermined American Security* by Bill Gertz, asserts baldly that the Clinton Administration has sold out imperialist interests to Russia and China, and is suggestive of incipient splits in ruling class circles. It is written by the “defense and security reporter” for the right-wing *Washington Times*. He gives particular thanks to “Reverend and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon,” the owners of this periodical.

What is stunning about this book is that it is based mostly on leaked

documents from dissidents within the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon. By some estimates, it would take decades – or longer – for the government to release some of these documents because of their sensitivity; yet, the author not only draws upon them in his text but reprints many of them in a lengthy appendix. The Clinton Administration – a principal target of these dissidents – supposedly contemplated litigation to do something about this violation of what they considered to be a major violation of “national security.”

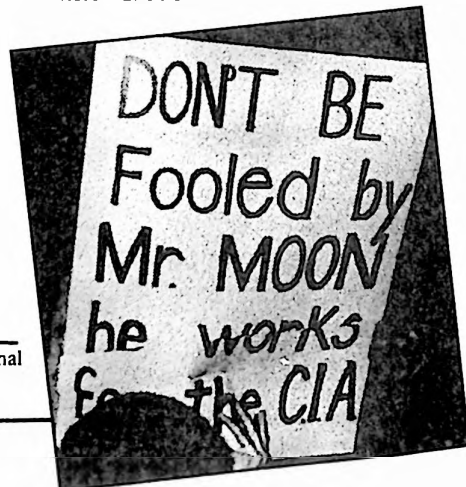
Though it is not the author’s intention, his heavy reliance on rogue elements within the national security establishment raises even more questions. For example, if rogue elements would be so bold as to leak sensitive documents, would they go the next step and arrange the bombing of China’s embassy in Belgrade in order to make an even bolder statement?

Certainly the author paints a picture that makes it seem as if the ultra-right within the security forces are often at war with their ostensible superiors in the White House. When Strobe Talbott, an old friend of Clinton who serves as Deputy Secretary of State, was to have a



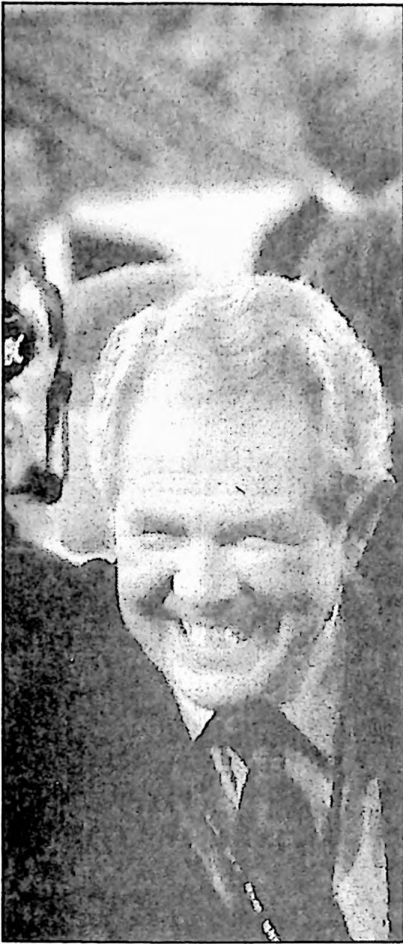
Rev Moon’s far-right *Washington Times* employs author of anti-Clinton book.

meeting with his Russian counterparts, “no Pentagon or CIA official was present...It was obvious the White House did



Gerald Horne is working on a book on Ferdinand Smith, Communist and leader of the National Maritime Union.

Class Commentary



Rev. Falwell's Christian Coalition is a central part of right-wing conspiracy to topple the presidency and destroy democracy.

not trust the CIA or Defense Department and purposely excluded those officials from the discussions."

Of course, one should not use such ideas so as to exculpate the



AP photo

White House for its barbaric policies in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it is well to remember that there are fascist minded forces in Washington who would provocatively take the world to the brink of extinction in vainglorious pursuit of their rapacious goals.

So what revelations does the author present?

What is striking is that despite the current notion of a prostrate Russia, a good deal of the venom in this book is directed at Moscow. Russia is accused of continuing to build up its military and charged with selling advanced weaponry to Iran – and China.

The author is contemptuous of the White House's "almost religious commitment to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty"; like his comrades on the far-right he wants to revive the discredited "Star Wars" scheme of the Reagan-Bush years, a putative violation of the ABM treaty.

Gertz, however, sees Beijing as a primary foe, even above Moscow. Certainly he views the recent entente between these two powers with grave apprehension and suspicion. There is little question that he believes that the Cold War has not ended – it has just entered a new stage. With barely concealed anger he concludes, "unless steps are taken to reduce the Chinese threat, the United States could find itself in a real conflict with the world's most populous state in the next ten years." This, he argues, is the fault of the White House: "Clinton has increased the danger that American men and women could face... an Asian war..."

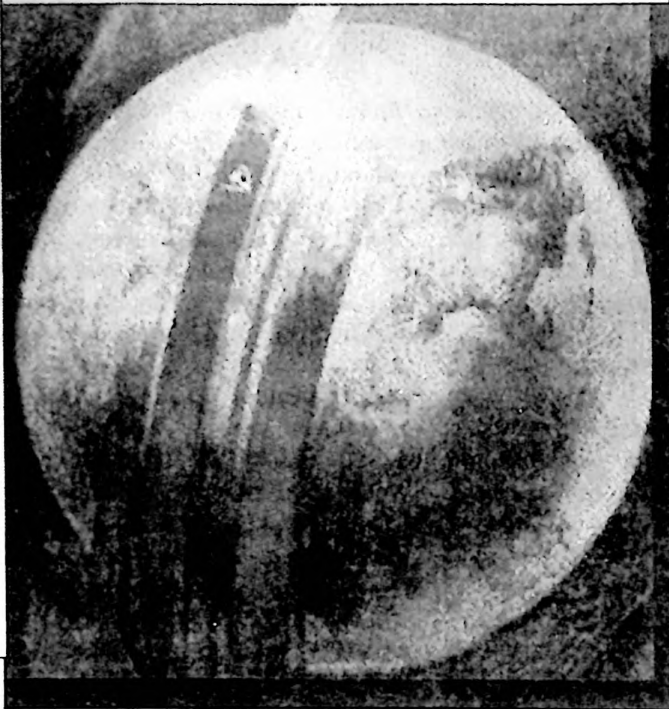
What is curious about this book and the recent report issued by GOP Congressman Christopher Cox of Orange County, California on alleged Chinese espionage at U.S. nuclear laboratories is that neither seem to remember recent history: i.e. the fact

that Beijing and Washington collaborated against the former Soviet Union. That helps to explain the fact that Chinese scientists were so frequently to be found in these laboratories; this also helps to explain the massive investments by Wall Street in China, which is hampering the formation of a united – and uniformly hostile – response by the U.S. ruling class to Beijing.

In fact, many of the "revelations" in this book are quite similar to those presented in the Cox Report. Both point the finger of accusation at certain U.S. corporate interests – principally Loral and Hughes, both of whom have been major contributors to the Democratic Party – and assert that they provided China with satellites and other high-tech paraphernalia in alleged violation of national security concerns.

In the long run this book is significant not because of such "revelations" but more so because of what it represents. It is apparent that there are those within the U.S. ruling class who are disappointed by the fact that despite spending trillions to subdue the Soviet Union, the U.S. still cannot dominate the world the way it would like. The response has been to suggest that a reason must be traitors – hence, the indictment of the Clinton Administration; yet another response has been an escalation of hostilities against Yugoslavia, then Russia and China so as to wipe out those perceived as standing in the way of U.S. hegemony.

In any event, this bellicose approach increases the responsibility of the progressive movement for it is clear that if we do not eliminate the influence of the ultra-right, they may succeed in their goal of eliminating us and, indeed, the bulk of humanity. □



Statement of Athens Conference

During the three-day meeting held in Athens on the topic "The Capitalist Crisis, Globalization and the Response of the Labor Movement" which was jointly convened as decided during the preparatory meeting of the Parties held in January 1999, 55 Communist and Workers Parties from 50 countries took part. A number of Parties who participated in preparations for the meeting were not able to attend because of the situation in their countries.

In the sessions held over the three days there was a creative exchange of views on the meeting's topics as well as on issues arising from recent developments such as the unjust and unacceptable intervention by the U.S. and its allies in NATO against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the continuing criminal bombings. Quite a few speakers mentioned the need to make public an Appeal for an immediate halt to the NATO bombings and for a solution that would establish the autonomy of Kosovo and the rights of all minorities, the safe return of all refugees to their homes, ensuring at the same time the national sovereignty and integrity

relations and uses existing and/or non-existent minority issues as a pretext to justify its interventions.

A considerable number of speakers referred to the existence of local wars, and to the flare-up of religious fundamentalism, racism and xenophobia.

The speakers noted that the last world crisis in 1997-1998 shows in the most categorical way that not only has the capitalist system failed to rid itself of crises but that in conditions of domination by finance capital and gigantic monopolies,

these crises are becoming yet deeper and more frequent, with destructive effects on the living standards of the working people, who constitute the huge majority of the population. The accumulation of impasses and contradictions in capitalist

of the Republic of Serbia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

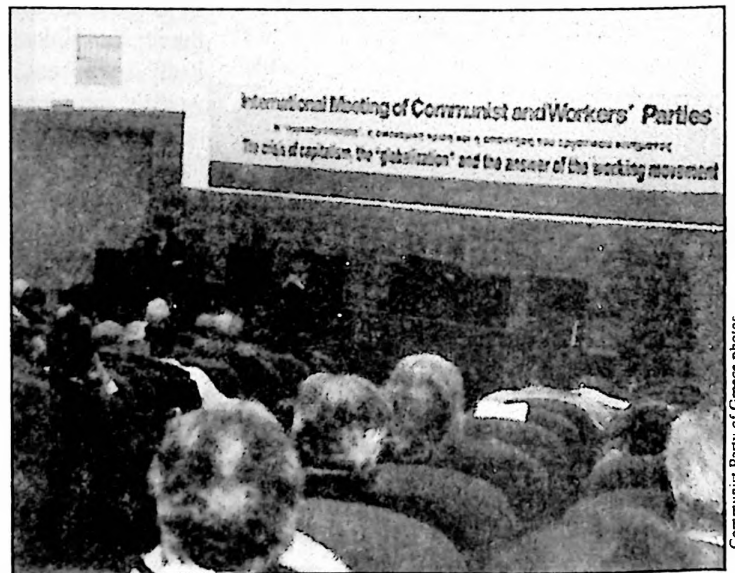
In the speeches the participants pointed out the dangers posed to world peace and security by the new strategic concept and new action doctrine of NATO, which upsets all the rules of international law to date, intensifies the militarization of international

society, the great growth of economic, political and strategic power of big finance capital and multi-national enterprises, the strong assault on basic social and democratic rights of the working people highlight how exceptionally timely it is to analyze capitalism but also the need and ways to overcome it.

The existence and operation of organizations dominated by the large imperialist powers such as the "G-8", the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, NATO and the European Union, the theories and the even more reactionary policies implemented in the name of "globalization," and the pressure pushing workers pay downwards make the rich richer and the poor poorer, cast billions of people into poverty, ignorance, disease, malnutrition and underdevelopment, intensifies the degree of exploitation of the working class, and exacerbate the ecological crisis.

Likewise noted were the constantly broadening gap between the opportunities created by new technologies and the way in which capitalism uses them against the rights and gains of the working people, against the right to work and the people's needs.

A number of speakers pointed out that these developments give rise to many new tasks for the Communist Parties but also to a wide spectrum of forces that oppose the neoconservative



Communist Party of Greece photos.

policy and the basic choices made by international capital.

The need for a broader meeting to be held on these topics and for further efforts for joint action and coordination was stressed.

The need for fresh initiatives for joint action by Communist Parties on regional and global levels and for all progressive and anti-imperialist left forces to rally was highlighted.

Likewise it was stressed that there is a need to develop international cooperation and joint activities that will contribute to the creation of a new

counterweight, the counterweight of the peoples, of social and political forces that confront the monopolies and imperialism.

The crucial nature of the situation, the considerable interactions in the working class, which is broadening its scope, along with the need for Communists to collectively elaborate the experience of the socialism we have known, demand that we multiply initiatives for mutual briefing and broad dissemination of Communist Party positions. During the meeting, Parties gave information on their con-

cerns and activities.

The need to promote ways in which Parties and public opinion in their countries can be briefed more fully and rapidly about the activities and concerns of Communists was underscored.

Quite a few speakers expressed their concern with regard to the continuous prohibitions, persecutions and discrimination against Communist Parties, Communists and, in general, against all who resist capitalist barbarity. □

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Terry Albano is a leader of the Communist Party. She is a member of its National Board. She is a machinist and served as national coordinator of the Young Communist League. She is the mother of two children.

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