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FIGHTING
YEARS



COMMUNIST PARTY USA

THINKING ABOUT U.S. SOCIALISM

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CULTURE AND THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Alice Sunshine



REACHING MILLIONS WITH IDEOLOGY

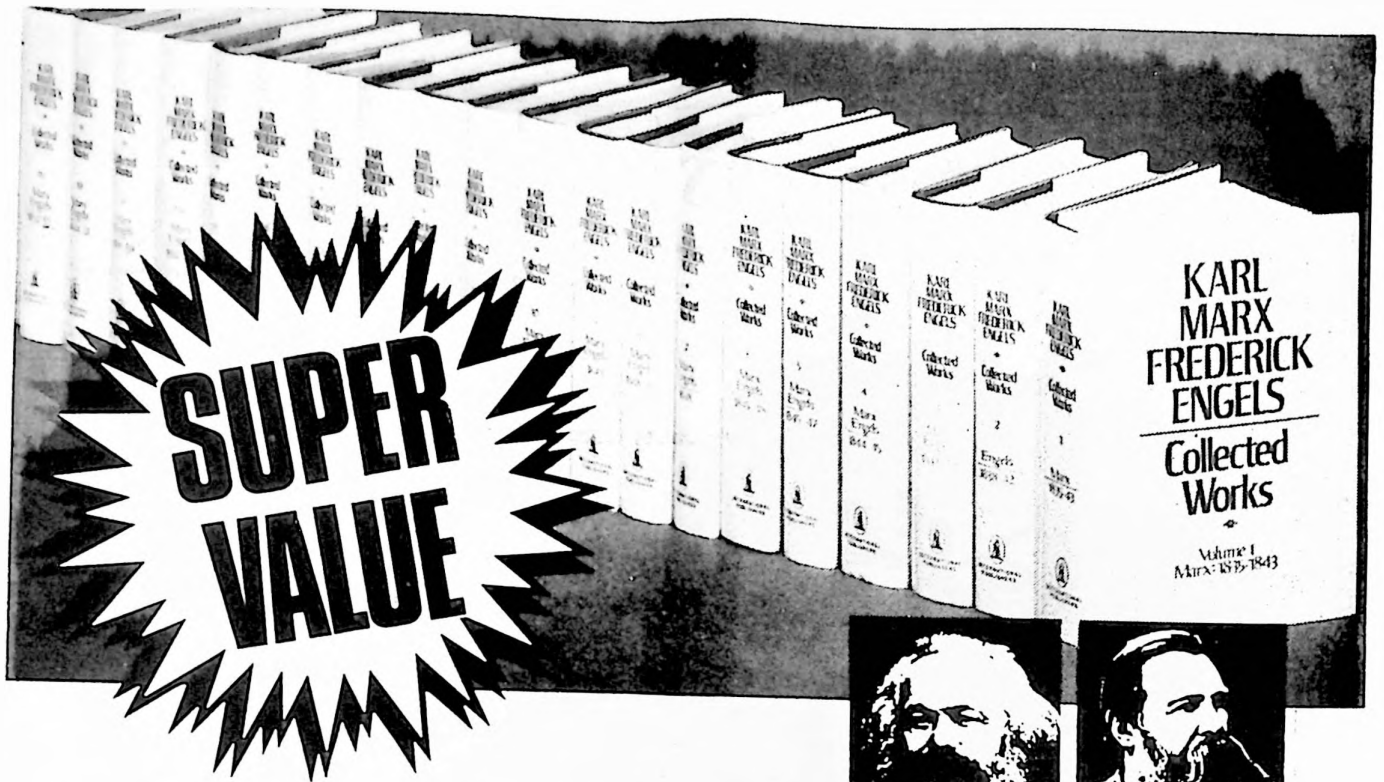
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Celebrating Seventy Years of Relevance

September 1st marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party, USA. By any measure, those 70 years have been an extraordinary saga.

Working in the most powerful country of capitalism, the CPUSA has participated in an incredible variety of events and has left an indelible imprint on the nation.

Throughout its history the Communist Party has attracted outstanding personalities, who typify the courage, initiative and ideals of the American democratic and revolutionary heritage. John Reed, a founder of modern journalism. William Z. Foster, perhaps the outstanding labor organizer of this century in our country. W.E.B. DuBois, father of the modern civil rights movement and outstanding scholar. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, fighter for free speech and labor rights. The great novelist Theodore Dreiser.

Alongside the prominent names have been tens of thousands of the most dedicated rank-and-file workers: those who form in-plant organizing committees, challenge segregation and discrimination, energize neighborhood peace organizations.

The political and organizational work of the Party has connected it to all major progressive movements: opposition to imperialism, from World War I to Vietnam, from Spain to Nicaragua. Organization of labor, from the CIO to Pittston. African-American equality, from Scottsboro to the Civil Rights Restoration Act.

Indeed, it would not be easy to name progressive figures of the last seven decades who were not influenced by the work and thought of Communists.

It is worth considering to what the Communist Party owes its durability, in the face of furious resistance and sometimes frenzied persecution by the forces of reaction.

Most of all, we believe, it is due to the fact that it has upheld the banner of a future socialist United States of America, and linked that future to the living movements of the American people. From the beginning, Communists have held to

the proposition put forward by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels that the liberation of the working class must be an act of the working class itself. Workers cannot act as a class without a political party, a world outlook and a program of their own. Today, socialism is both a scientifically substantiated body of views, a worldwide movement, and a form of social organization which has been chosen by one-third of the people on earth.

While American Communists have been inspired by the Soviet revolution and other peoples building socialism, they hold that our socialist future will be rooted here, in our history, geography and socio-economic reality, forged by the activities of our own multinational working class.

The recent ideological conference of the CPUSA indicated the scope of the work of American Communists on current and long-term problems. It showed that, indeed, the Communist Party has as much practical program as lofty vision. It has been the most consistent in working out the logic of the nuclear age: the need to work toward nuclear disarmament as an imperative of survival.

It pointed out the dangers of the growing concentration of economic and political power in the hands of monopoly capital, and the need for radically democratizing that power. It urged the need for the broadest unity to counter the reactionary, anti-people, anti-labor, racist forces which have been entrenching themselves in power.

It provided new thinking about specific steps needed to go beyond proclaiming the goal of complete equality for African Americans, and to make that equality effective in practice. And it tackled dozens of other problems, from the environment to culture to the urban crisis.

In short, the Communist Party remains relevant to our future—in fact, essential. So long as there is a working class striving to be free, so long as society needs the guidance of a scientific world outlook, that will not change. □

Panel Reports to the Ideological Conference of the Communist Party, USA

The six reports which follow were delivered at the First Ideological Conference of the Communist Party, USA, held in Chicago, IL, July 14-16, 1989. The other eleven panel reports prepared for and presented at the Conference were published in the Political Affairs' issues of June and July 1989.

THINKING ABOUT A SOCIALIST USA

Lou Diskin

Member of the National Committee
Communist Party, USA

Report to the Conference panel on "U.S. Socialism."

The enthusiastic universal cry, "Gorby! Gorby!" is first of all a universal recognition that it is the socialist Soviet Union that is leading the fight to save humankind. The majority of the earth's peoples sense that their fate is inexorably bound up with the success of perestroika, with socialism's renewal.

Perestroika and glasnost have entered the world's vocabulary as terms synonymous with socialism, with honesty and openness, with peace and progress. People more fully understand why it is socialism, most of all, that is brimming over with new, creative and exciting ideas to save and develop civilization.

Despite unprecedented wealth and power, and after more than 200 years of rule, U.S. capitalism has failed to solve the most pressing problems facing the people. On the contrary, it constantly introduces new burdens that exacerbate the difficulties and dangers.

Problems cry out for answers and people feel instinctively that the means are at hand to solve them—but they also know "the system" won't do it.

All this underscores the need for our Party to educate ourselves and all advanced workers on

the necessity for a socialist USA. It has been too long missing from our agenda.

A NEW CIVILIZATION ■ Socialism is a new civilization—a social system that makes the needs and interests of working people its central, daily concern. By ending the basic source of greed and degradation—private profits and exploitation—socialism creates the basis to carry through a deep-going revolution in the psychological and spiritual makeup of working people. "We" and "ours" become dominant over "I" and "mine." Anything that fetters the aim of making socialism the most peaceful, open, caring and humane society in history is objectively alien to it.

At the same time, socialist practice and the laws of development have proven that there is no single world model. This does not imply that "our socialism" will be better than socialism in other countries. Each social system has many basic principles whose essence is similar. For example, under socialism political power must be dominated by working people. There must be public ownership of, at least, the main means of production. Moreover, we are internationalists and humanists who are studying and learning from other peoples' experiences and achievements as desirable and necessary.

A socialist USA must be the will and work of our people, based on our specific conditions, needs and possibilities. It will produce many unique styles, forms and methods and possibly new principles. These unique features will be shaped by the specific character and nature of

struggles on the path to socialism. They will be molded by the psychological and cultural makeup, with its wide variety of conflicting values, of our working class.

Perhaps of decisive importance, socialism in this country will also be shaped by the very high level of industrial and agricultural development, the heights scaled in science and technology, the vast resources, workingclass skills and discipline, and the organizational and administrative abilities honed by long experience.

It is necessary to study the impact of these and other specifics on a socialist USA as objectively as possible, without the slightest hint of national exclusiveness, of national chauvinism.

Our Party is working to assure the broadest unity in action that will win radical democratic reforms now. At the same time, Communists should project a living image of how a socialist USA would solve the urgent social problems our people currently face—an image which combines our present possibilities with the advantages of a social system where working peoples' needs and rights—not private profit—are the central concern. For example, how long would it take in a socialist USA to place every working person into decent housing (including, of course, access to good schools, adequate shopping facilities, a clean environment, cultural facilities and municipal services)?

On December 8, 1941, the United States entered World War II. Less than a million men were in active service. By the end of 1942, more than 12 million men and women were processed, housed, clothed, fed and trained for that epic event. Today our material possibilities are far greater than in 1943. If the need to provide decent housing were declared a national emergency, would it take a socialist USA more than a decade to solve this question? Two decades? Surely not longer.

Realistic ballpark estimates can be made for the solution of other needs as well—health, schools, child care, transportation, jobs. We must assemble a large body of popular, imaginative and exacting answers that can be used convincingly in shops, communities and mass media. Communists and friends of socialism in every field must stretch their imagination to the outer limits of realism and help the workingclass movement enlarge its vision of a socialist USA. Such projections can assist present struggles and

give us a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship between reform and revolution.

Building a socialist USA will not be a picnic, but our people will not have to go through the tragedies and pains that the Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese and other peoples had to—and will yet have to—endure. A socialist USA will quickly establish, with verve, its superiority over the old monopolist order.

In the 20th Century we have experienced powerful political impulses that have altered relationships of world forces which helped speed up revolutionary change. Certainly, the influence of world socialism has been playing such a role. But socialist revolution cannot be exported. If objective and subjective factors are not ripe within a given country, there will be no fundamental change.

The internal knot of economic, social and political contradictions that capitalism constantly breeds—the class struggle in the first place—gives rise to the inevitability aspect of socialist revolution. If the majority of working people want to end capitalism, they have no choice but socialism. Assuming there will be no nuclear Armageddon, socialism is history's only alternative to capitalism.

However, a moribund system does not bury itself. U.S. capitalism still has plenty of kick in it. A great deal of creative theoretical and practical work must be done before the "corpse" is laid to rest.

In this connection, one very important field which we have insufficiently developed in the past is the cultivation of the democratic and revolutionary aspects of our historical heritage which can assist us in this fight.

Capitalism is the most cruel, selfish and destructive system in all history. Perverting the triumph of science, U.S. imperialism has brought humanity to the brink of total destruction. But Communists are not nihilists. U.S. capitalism has also contributed much of lasting value to world civilization. However, it can only be properly interpreted and assessed from a Marxist-Leninist point of view, in terms of what—in the broadest sense—it contributes to human liberation.

Our country's revolutionary origin and the Second American Revolution which destroyed slavery, advanced democratic change giant steps forward. Humanist, radical and revolutionary ideas and actions are deeply embedded in the

collective U.S. psyche, in our culture and traditions. They were fertilized by thousands of experimental utopian socialist and radical colonies, by the rise and spread of Marxist thought on U.S. soil more than 150 years ago, and by the mass battles led by U.S. worker, socialist and Communist parties from the middle of the 19th century on. The CPUSA alone spans more than a third of the entire U.S. history.

Fierce, massive class and democratic battles crowd our history to this very hour. The powerful blows struck by the African-American people for full equality have added new contours to the freedom aspirations of our entire people. All these struggles have brought forth tens of thousands of working-class heroines and heroes, whose deeds for social emancipation are legendary. The American drama is still unfinished and a socialist USA is the logical and natural next big step in fulfilling the American Dream.

BILL OF RIGHTS SOCIALISM ■ Gus Hall has often talked about "a Bill-of-Rights socialism" for our country. That is a popular, shorthand description with many implications.

Central to this concept is a democratic, anti-monopoly strategy and tactics that will mobilize the overwhelming majority of Americans to advance to socialism within the framework of our Constitution. We want to carry forward, in qualitatively new ways and content, the most progressive political, economic and social achievements that the working people have won throughout our history. Political and other structures must obtain a new class content, new aims in conformity with social emancipation, and a way to exercise power that advances and enhances social justice.

Of course, many of the structures U.S. capitalism has established should be dismantled. Its bureaucracy is mind-boggling and has no equal anywhere in the world. It is especially designed to help corruption, lying and thievery flourish. Many agencies are formidable barriers and destroyers of the people's rights.

Hundreds of hard problems will confront a socialist USA. Two areas are especially decisive. How will the worker exercise power from the workplace to the presidency? And how will a socialist USA guarantee elimination of racism, anti-Semitism, male supremacy, ethnic discrimination, religious intolerance, etc.?

We must not give simplistic answers to these questions. Experience shows that proclaiming political power and equality and codifying these proclamations in law are important, but not enough. Power and equality need a material base—in the economic structure from top to bottom, on every level of jurisprudence, state and government, every avenue of cultural life.

Most of all, workers' power and equality must be expressed in the political and social activities of organized groups that will shape the rules, decisions and laws and supply the key people to monitor these processes. There must be constant checkup for correcting weaknesses and errors in time and meeting the need to change, if necessary. Nor can educational and ideological work be neglected for one minute.

Every working-class and every national question has its own specific features that are formed by its own history of development and struggle. And those workers and their organizations, in the midst of these developments and struggles, will give to a socialist USA the best answers. In the context of opportunities for all, socialism must carry through an unprecedented affirmative action program in record time and continue it until there is not a shred of inequality left.

Our Party's most important "business" is to rally the majority of American workers to win and build a socialist USA. Problems abound. It would be wrong to think that our Party alone must or will supply all the answers.

A strong ideological ferment is arising in our country and sweeping throughout the world. Workers, farmers, women, youth and intellectuals in all disciplines are exploring the same landscape, producing valuable data, insights and many interesting ideas. In this broad process the Party must become an ideological workhorse, stimulating exacting research and discussion in all directions, and working with all those who are creatively searching for solutions.

A great dialectic is at work in the world. The more the misleading media try to "bury" socialism, the more the best workers will ask: What is socialism? It is a question we must not fail to answer. □

REACHING THE MILLIONS WITH OUR IDEOLOGY

Carole Marks,

Member of the National Board
Communist Party, USA

Report to the Conference panel on "Reaching and Persuading the Millions with Marxist-Leninist Ideology."

Preparing for this workshop has forced me to start thinking about what are some of the ideological roots of our approach to the mass media. That is something we rarely do. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we have so far to go in this area. It is nowhere more true than in media work that we need your experiences and observations to develop an approach, because we have relatively little collective experience in it. These opening remarks are meant to start a discussion that will help the Party to increase its use of mass forms to speak to people.

You hear it said all the time that "we live in an age of mass communication." Not long ago Marshall McLuhan coined the term, "the medium is the message." This did not happen all of a sudden. It is a process that has been developing over the last three decades at least. In recent years it has accelerated. This presents us with a qualitatively new situation in how the Party works to reach masses of Americans.

As a matter of fact, more people watch TV, listen especially to radio talk shows and read their daily newspapers than ever before. This presents us with a qualitatively new situation in how the Party works to reach masses of Americans. The new, modern technology has opened up tremendous new possibilities for reaching hundreds, thousands and millions of people. No other communication channel gives the opportunity to speak to so many people in so little time. Even though we don't own the means of communication there are unprecedented possibilities to speak to large numbers of people. In fact, today no movement goes anywhere without using the mass media. You could say it is a necessity for us today. If we don't use the media we lack a certain legitimacy and we have a much harder time reaching people with our ideas and program.

Now, after a few years of breakthrough work, we are seen as the stable, recognized Party of the left. When producers, writers and radio talk show hosts do want to view from the left,

they call us. And they say so. We have a growing legitimacy and even prestige.

A MATERIAL FORCE ■ For the Party particularly, ideology is a material force and a central part of our work, more so than in the mass organizations. Building class consciousness among workers is an inseparable part of what we are about. You could say that our "plus" is our Marxist-Leninist ideology. But what good is our ideology if we don't use it to reach millions? "Internal" ideology has no power. As Engels and Marx said, only when ideology is grasped by the people does it become a material force. Then, ideology is power.

One of the main tactics of the ruling class toward our Party is to limit us, to restrict; us, to isolate us from the people. Use of the mass media is the most effective way of breaking out, broadening people's view of the Party. It may be easier to appreciate the importance of mass media work by imagining what it would be like if there were even one network Marxist-Leninist news program, or one national Communist radio show, or if there were local newspapers with the content and style of *The People's Daily World*. Just that could change the political atmosphere in our country qualitatively. We get an idea of what this would be like when we realize how extensively our show, "People Before Profits," is getting on cable stations all over the country.

IDEOLOGICAL RUBBER BANDS ■ The main obstacles to our making more use of the mass media are ideological. It is not that it is too difficult, or that we do not know how—even though in many cases we do not. But if there were not some kind of ideological resistance we would learn and overcome the difficulties. Let me suggest some of the ideological obstacles within the Party that hold us back like rubber bands.

1 • Seeing our media work as a mere drop in the bucket compared to the overwhelming and constant barrage of ruling class propaganda.

2 • An attitude that our ideas are too advanced for the American people to handle now.

3 • Not believing that it is possible to get our ideas across in the bourgeois media; not believing that the atmosphere toward Communists has changed and continues changing in our country.

4 • Thinking our Party's ideas are not as important to get across as the ideas of the mass

movements, or feeling that if we express our support for the mass movements, for instance, for unions, the peace and solidarity movements, civil rights, etc., that will be used to discredit these movements.

5 • Lacking self-confidence in one's ability to get across our ideas in a popular, understandable and convincing way.

6 • Not seeing use of the mass media as a necessary aspect of Communist leadership.

In brief, here are the kinds of responses we must give to these ideological rubber bands.

Of course we don't own and control the media. The ruling ideas are those of the ruling class, as Marx and Engels said. But it is one of those contradictions of the system that there is a lot we can do within the system to gain access. We are already doing it. One thing is that we are interesting, controversial, newsworthy. Those are big media pluses and we need to learn much better how to use them. Also, the hypocritical pretense of "balance" and "objectivity" in the bourgeois media sometimes forces them to give us an airing, especially if we work at it.

We find more and more that individual reporters, producers, talk show hosts, especially the younger ones, are honestly open and interested in our ideas and are often willing to "buck the system" by giving our ideas an airing. Many people, as well as professionals in the field, are distrustful, disgusted and cynical about government, corporations, politicians and understand the monopoly control of the mass communications technology. They are often turned off by this, and often turned on, if not at first, but certainly at the end of an interview, by our ideas. Besides our ideology, we are really nice people.

Anyone who feels that the atmosphere in our country is still as anti-communist as ever surely has not watched or listened to a talk show or read a newspaper article about our Party in the recent period. We get feedback from all over that the atmosphere is visibly and rapidly improving.

On the surface, anything we do in the media is a drop in the bucket compared to the flood from other sources. But in a deeper sense, what we have to say is of a totally different quality and so its effect on people is totally different. In other words, you might say a grain of truth is worth more than a pile of lies.

The more we can reach people and say things that make sense when they put it into the

framework of their own life's experience, the more the lies themselves will expose the hypocrisy of the system. Any honest person who hears what we have to say will think differently about Communists and perhaps capitalism and even socialism. When we speak to people we leave a "political residue" that people remember when something happens that recalls ideas we projected.

Thinking that our ideas are too advanced for the American people is in fact out of touch with where people are at. That idea is a reflection of the ruling class's effort to force us into a narrow ideological alley. In fact, we have majority ideas, the opposite of how we are portrayed. We also have advanced ideas that take more imagination and creativity to get across. When people discover how much we have to say, their views of the Communist Party and our ideology are changed forever. We are often surprised at how anti-corporate, anti-government, anti-corruption and often non-bigoted people have become, and how receptive to our ideas.

If we take the attitude that the Party's ideas are not as important to get across as the ideas of the mass movements, or that we might discredit the movements by association, then we are in fact limiting the unique contribution we can make to the movements themselves—our Marxist-Leninist, class struggle plus.

Lacking confidence in one's ability to get across our ideas popularly is probably one of our major obstacles. Objectively, we know that not using the media is more damaging than making some mistakes on the air, which, by the way, anyone who uses the media will do. Inexperience breeds fear and hesitation. But comrades who fear speaking on the mass media usually surprise themselves. Also, if we see using the mass media as a one-time thing we might as well forget it. It is a process, an art that we need to learn and master with time and experience. We have to develop communist TV and radio personalities.

For all the reasons so far given, and more, we need to see mass media work as part of the job description, the assignment of Party leaders, and heads of districts in particular.

Times have changed. Today, public communist leaders cannot carry out their full responsibilities without fighting to get the ear of the people through the mass media. And it is a fight, a conscious, planned and consistent effort to become

known and popular as a talk show guest, guest speaker, column writer, TV panelist, etc.

THE POTENTIAL ■ Considering that most of our work on media is spontaneous, that is, they seek us out unsolicited, we can say we are doing a lot. This is very significant and says much about what the possibilities are. It didn't come easy for us. But we recognized early the new openings and the necessity of using mass media if we want to reach lots of people.

We have done so much work on the media throughout the country in the past few years that, for example, Gus Hall and Angela Davis, are sought-after personalities on the TV and talk show circuits. In fact, everyone else on the left is left behind. Especially in the last two or three years there has been a dramatic shift in the way in which our Party is sought out by the media and how seriously our ideas are taken. This is a new experience for us, a new openness for us. This cannot be called anything but "unprecedented openness and mass work."

However, considering what our potential is, you'd have to say we're missing the media boat in our work. With only a few exceptions, we wait for the media to come to us, rather than aggressively seeking it out and using it. We have no full-timer in the national office. And that's what it takes. Very few cadre hours are spent on seeking media exposure in the states and districts, and there are few or no permanent major assignments of comrades to media work. As a result, we don't do enough to develop ongoing solid relationships with professional media people that could pay off in a big way as time goes on. When we do establish a relationship with a producer or talk show host, for example, as we have with a few shows and stations, it does pay off.

It becomes a vicious cycle—when we don't have an organized approach to the media, the less likely they will be to seek us out, the less we think about and learn how to use it, the fewer relations we build with media people, the less public we become and the more fearful, etc.

OUR MEDIA PLUS—A MATERIAL FORCE ■ Here are some of the main ideological contributions we should try to make through the media:

1 • Understanding the nature of capitalism as the root cause of our problems.

2 • Racism is immoral, but also the source of

immense superprofits and division between our multiracial, multinational, male-female, young and older working class; unity as necessary to social progress.

3 • What socialism is about, particularly "Socialism USA" and its special features on the ideological level. We should deal with questions like: socialism is not a utopian dream. It is the next inevitable step on the ladder of human progress. Socialism is a result of a law-governed process. It is the basic flaws in capitalism which shape the nature of socialism. Socialism is the elimination of those flaws.

On the level of defending and explaining the changes in the socialist countries, we should start from the premise that we are partisans of socialism and thus our attitude is determined by our ideology. Bourgeois critics denounce the mistakes and weaknesses and even the crimes committed under socialism to attack and destroy socialism. This comes from their ideology. We should criticize these same mistakes, weaknesses and crimes, but also to explain, and, yes, to defend socialism. We should also work to dispel the myths of anti-communism as the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.

4 • We should talk about the working class as the most progressive class and class struggle as the motor of history; that history has a direction and it is in the direction of socialism.

5 • We should always put the plus into our work. For example, our Party supports all the many movements and struggles for change, and every action by anyone that moves in that progressive direction. But we have to add the plus. In popular language, we have to explain that the real cause for poverty is capitalism.

We join all broad forces who are concerned about saving humanity from nuclear extinction. But the plus explains how the nuclear danger is related to the U.S. corporate-imperialist drive to dominate the world so U.S. corporations can exploit people and resources.

Our plus in the struggle against racism is found in the initiatives we take and in explaining how racism, discrimination and bigotry are related to the corporate drive for superprofits.

Our plus brings to the fore the reasons why the working class is the leading social force for a peaceful world and human progress on all fronts. Our plus militantly works for the unity of our class, for enhancing its self-confidence and inde-

pendent political role and energetically refutes petty bourgeois "radicalist" as well as bourgeois denigration of the working class. What our Party has to offer is vitally needed for new advances in Black-white, working-class unity.

Our plus includes exposure and isolation of old notions which impinge on and hamper the process of development—anti-communism, anti-Sovietism, racism, anti-Semitism and nationalism, the ultra-right and Zionism.

Our plus explains the need for anti-monopoly, anti-militarist democracy.

And, our plus must explain that the working class and the people, without a working-class revolutionary Party like the CPUSA are at a disadvantage in the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

MAIN CHALLENGES ▣ Here are a few examples of some typical questions we are asked and some ideas on how to answer them.

"Communism is dying. Why try and hold on to it?" ▣ We should respond that what's going on in the socialist countries is a part of the process of socialism developing beyond capitalism in all spheres. It is already superior in terms of workers' rights, equality and guarantees of basic human needs for all. Americans should be a little humble when they say socialism has "failed" in light of our poverty, homelessness, health care crisis, racism and despair.

Now the socialist countries are moving ahead in the area of democracy and working to catch up to and surpass capitalism in production. Their difficulties are more understandable when seeing the conditions socialism has grown up under.

Also, socialism is built daily by people and people make mistakes and the socialist countries have made their share. But we still think it is a better way of organizing society than capitalism and will be better for us in the USA when the majority of Americans decide.

"But there is no freedom under socialism." ▣ What socialism is all about is giving people the real freedom to develop to their full human potential—a freedom that the majority of people under capitalism don't have. A prerequisite to this is freedom from poverty, exploitation, discrimination and inequality. Due to the conditions socialism developed under, in its short life so far, there

have not been as many democratic rights as there should be under socialism, but they are working hard to change that now. Where in the capitalist world is the system moving toward more democracy? What is being done in our country about the fact that the majority of American people don't even vote? Why is there no democracy at all when workers walk through the plantgate or the office door? Socialism USA will have the advantage of starting from a much higher plane of democratic tradition and economic development.

"Americans don't like communism. They don't want it." ▣ Americans have been lied to about communism and socialism in one of history's biggest propaganda campaigns, so that most Americans have total misconceptions of what we are about. We find with most people that when we talk about what we really believe—with fellow workers, neighbors, fellow activists, etc.—they agree. For instance, we call for doubling the minimum wage, free national health care, fighting racism and discrimination, negotiating nuclear disarmament and slashing the military budget, enacting a massive emergency housing construction program, restoring and raising taxes on the corporations and the rich, while easing the burden on working people and the poor. Most people agree with these and similar ideas.

Also, we are not sitting on our hands waiting for socialism to come. We are very active in fighting for a better life for people under capitalism. But we believe, and we tell people we work with, that progress under capitalism can go only so far, that socialism in the USA will be necessary for a qualitative improvement in the lives of most Americans.

"Why not call yourselves 'socialists' or 'progressive democrats' or something like that, and save yourselves a lot of trouble?" ▣ We are proud of being Communists and we do not want to deceive anyone. And if we do not fight anti-communism we cannot expect anyone else to. Until Americans are no longer fooled by anti-Communist misconceptions and fear the power elite in this country will keep on saying, "Those people call themselves progressive democrats but they are really Communists." And they will keep on saying the same thing about the most militant trade unionists, about peace activists, fighters for equality—about anyone who wants to buck the system that keeps on making the rich richer and

the poor poorer.

Through the media we should try to answer questions and say things in a way that will dispell honest people's anti-Communist misconceptions, which is easy to do—we just have to say who we are, how we work, and what we stand for. And we should project the positive view of our Party, that it has concrete solutions for the problems that the great majority of Americans face.

The media doors are opening for us. We have to turn the spontaneous breakthrough work we're doing into a positive process of speaking to millions on a regular basis throughout the country. Like everything else worth winning, it will only come if we understand the need for it and work at it. □

IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO NATIONALLY OPPRESSED PEOPLES

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Report to the Conference panel on "Ideological Questions in Relation to Nationally Oppressed Peoples Other than African-American, Chicano-Mexicano and Puerto Rican."

In some ways the task of this workshop is most difficult. There is a workshop on the African-American people, one on the Chicano-Mexicano people and one on the Puerto Rican people. At our 1987 convention we had such workshops and commissions and one on the Asian Pacific American peoples and another on anti-Semitism and Zionism. There were comrades then who were unhappy that we did not have workshops dealing with Native American Indians, Arab and Middle Eastern peoples, other Latino peoples and Caribbean people.

We could not provide here six separate workshops to be added to the 16 other workshops for this conference. So it was decided to discuss here the nationally oppressed, except for those for whom separate workshops have been provided.

This is a difficult solution but so would any other be. It reflects the fact that there is no country in the world that has a more complex and difficult national question than the USA, and that

our very small Party with very limited resources is not yet very far along in addressing itself to the equality struggles of these peoples.

I was asked to open the workshop, most likely because I am one of those who teach on the national question and on the nationally oppressed in the U.S., and I am part of the daily leadership of the Party. We have no one who is an "expert" with regard to all these peoples. In preparation I met with comrades active among a number of them.

Since this is an ideological conference, our focus is not reaching specific decisions on issues, demands and policies toward the movements of struggle nor on how to strengthen the work of the Party. What we should ask and probe are questions such as: What are the ideological justifications given by the racists, by the monopoly capitalists, by the Bush Administration, and by the Supreme Court, for the inequality, oppression and racism these peoples experience? Is this ideological attack being stepped up or reduced? What is happening to the mass thought patterns of white working people with respect to the ideological justifications for inequality, oppression and racism? Are they buying what is being fed to them? Is there a main trend on this and are there counter trends?

What is happening to the mass struggle patterns of the nationally and racially oppressed peoples? How strong are the trends of united social fightback together with allies, compared to (1) personal resistance and survival only, (2) the idea "the less others see and hear of us the better we will do," (3) nationalist go-it-alone tendencies, and (4) pro-Reagan-Bush conservatism and accommodationism? Which way are the thought patterns moving and why?

What basic positions of the Party, with regard to the fight for full equality and against racism in relation to these peoples, cause confusion, unclarity or even differences in and around the Party? What do we think about these questions?

The answers to these questions may be different when speaking about different peoples. It is very important to see both what is general to all oppressed peoples and to understand that the general is always expressed through the particular situation of each oppressed people.

The Reagan Administration had a different ideological position toward the Cubans than toward the Salvadorans or the Palestinians in the

U.S., even though there are also progressive Cubans in the U.S. White working people may have a more backward attitude toward the Haitians than toward some other peoples because of media propaganda that all Haitians have AIDS. The mass thought patterns of an ideological-political character among Filipinos may move in one direction while those of Jamaicans may move in another. Clearly, there are substantial similarities in the forms of inequality and oppression, and yet there are some important differences. The extreme poverty and ill health of Native American Indians on reservations and of Southeast Asians and Haitians illustrate this, as does the situation of the direct victims where English Only has won. If this is true, then the ruling class will use different ideological justifications for oppression in each structure.

We are discussing peoples with quite sizable populations in the U.S. and in some cases growing very rapidly. Asian Pacific Americans and Latinos are increasing the fastest of all nationality groupings in the U.S.

Already, one in every four people in the U.S. is nationally oppressed. Since most of them are more heavily working-class than the population as a whole, about 30 percent of the working class experiences national and racial oppression. It is also clear that migration to the U.S. of various Asian, African and other peoples seeking economic security and a better life will probably speed up rather than slow down for many years ahead, despite U.S. laws and their enforcement.

There are many objective factors that influence mass thought patterns of the various oppressed peoples as well as what the ruling class tries to do, its ideological justifications and, as well, the thought patterns of white working people. These objective factors include: • developments in the U.S. economy; • the period when a people originally came to the U.S. (or were here, as in the case of Native American Indians); • how recent and sizable has been the immigration; • the conditions (economic, social and political) of the country of origin; • the common reasons for emigrating; • their location in the U.S.—urban, rural, concentrations in a few areas or in many areas of the country; • class and social composition; • legal status; • language situation; • cultural heritage.

As we know, nationality processes do not stand still but keep developing under new condi-

tions. There is the influence on this development of the country of origin (past and continuing influence), and of U.S. conditions, including the national consciousness of the dominant people of the U.S. and that of people from the same country and from similar countries of the same region of the world.

U.S. imperialist aggression abroad, whether against Korea and Vietnam earlier, against Lebanon, Grenada, Libya, Iran and Panama more recently, and economic competition with Japan, go hand in hand with stimulation of chauvinism and racist stereotypes against these peoples within the U.S.

Our Party's position based on Marxism-Leninism can be briefly summarized as follows:

The root cause of inequality, national oppression and racism in the U.S. is capitalism and the class interests of the monopoly capitalists. They reap immense extra profits, superprofits, each year from lower pay for equal work and for work of comparable value.

There are also huge profits in the current robbery of land and natural resources from the American Indians. Superprofits from all the nationally oppressed amount to 1/4 to 1/3 of total profits. Because of the influence of the ruling class ideology of racism and resulting insufficient unity in the working class that means less unionization and less successful struggle by the workers, monopoly capital also pays white workers less and secures higher profits as a result. Because of this influence among white workers, the development of class consciousness is seriously held back and the monopoly capitalists are more secure in their economic, political, social and cultural domination of the country. Racism, when accepted by workers, is a form of class collaboration with the boss. There is no more important weapon of the ruling class than racism in its struggle to maximize profits, preserve its system and prevent the development of socialist consciousness. Therefore, racism and national oppression serve the interests of monopoly capitalism and are counter to the class interests of the whole working class.

There are, of course, contending explanations as to the source of national oppression and racism. There is the racist explanation that blames the victims for their own victimization and thus justifies inequality and oppression. In

this view, there is an alleged cultural pathology of poverty passed on through the family, and particularly by nationally oppressed women, to the next generations.

Thus there are the racist views promoted that "Dominicans are all drug addicts so write them off"; that "Jamaicans are all murderous gangsters"; that American Indians are "primitive people and drunkards responsible for their own poverty"; that all Palestinians and Iranians "are terrorists and deserve police control"; that the Japanese and Koreans are "taking over the community businesses and the country and are doing better than "real" Americans and need to be restricted"; that the Asians "work so hard and drive their children so hard that they are taking over our universities and we can't compete. Caps must be placed on their enrollment."

The ruling class tries to promote the idea "the influx of foreigners is to blame for unemployment and job insecurity," not capitalism.

Liberals say the problem is simply miseducation and prejudice, which can be solved in time by education. Nationalists tend to say the problem is white people as a whole, their backward character and/or inherent drive for power.

Relatively few people as yet understand the class nature and roots of oppression and racism. Among white workers experiences have taught some how the boss gains when racism divides the workers and how workers benefit when they are more united. We have made a major contribution in making clear the class source of racism, both among the nationally oppressed and among white working people.

The struggle of the nationally and racially oppressed is for full economic, political, social and cultural equality. This means actual equality, not just "equality of opportunity."

The measures needed to achieve equality include tough anti-discrimination laws, affirmative action (with quotas) laws, and tough enforcement. This must include an end to the ceiling that prevents oppressed people rising beyond a certain level in public and private employment. Other compensatory programs, like massive spending programs in inner cities for job creation, housing, health, recreational and cultural needs, infrastructure, job training for today's high tech jobs, etc.

Tough laws against racist violence and racist agitation are needed at all levels. Laws are

needed to provide bilingual education and bilingual governmental activities in communities using Spanish and other languages. Cultural rights must be protected. Special approaches are needed to protect reservations. We need to overturn much of the Simpson Rodino Law to guarantee that once in this country, full social welfare and citizenship benefits are provided, and we must end the job penalties for the undocumented. We will have to fight to gain control over mass media and mass culture, to prevent programs that stimulate racism, and win programs that promote anti-racism and internationalism among our many nationality groups. The educational system must be cleansed of chauvinism and racism with respect to content and staffing and instead should actively promote ethnic studies and appreciation for all peoples, for unity in diversity, from the earliest age. Redress and reparations to the Japanese people forced into concentration camps during World War II must be fully carried out. We stand for full political representation at every level and for changes in electoral procedures and structures to achieve this. Indian reservations must be represented in Congress; this will require structural changes in Congress.

Indian and other political prisoners whose civil liberties are being violated must be freed.

In the main, these measures will have to be won by pressure on the different levels of government for legislative, executive and judicial action. Some can also be advanced in contract negotiations and by direct action.

What can, and cannot be won under capitalism? A great deal can be won while capitalism still lasts. No one can say exactly what measures can or cannot be won. It is clear, however, that the capitalists will try, till the end of their class days, to use racism—to reinject it, to take away what has been won—as one of the most potent ways to divert white working people and hold on to the system. And when there is such an immense profit and political stake in racism and national oppression, ending racism and ending capitalism become closely intertwined.

This view does not mean waiting for socialism rather than carrying on an urgent struggle against all forms of national oppression and racism and for workingclass unity, unity of the oppressed and anti-monopoly people's unity. Ur-

gently carrying on this struggle, at the maximum possible level, is a decisive task to strengthen class and anti-monopoly unity and weaken the monopolies and thus be able to win socialism. Such mass struggle for the type of demands outlined is crucial to be able to win socialism.

In order to advance the struggle for full equality, the Party proposes the following strategic policy. *We seek maximum unity of the working class which can only be based on rejecting the influence of racism and supporting special demands. We seek maximum unity of each oppressed people internally in the struggle for equality. Within this oppressed people's unity, we seek the leading role of the workers of that oppressed people.*

This policy will help shape: who is seen as the enemy; militant mass forms of struggle; radicalness of demands; and whether there is a seeking of allies among the working class as a whole, other oppressed peoples and anti-monopoly strata.

Alliance with the whole of the working class is needed, including the 65-75 percent of it that is white, because only the working class as a whole has the power needed to tackle such a formidable foe—monopoly capital and its governments—over such big stakes. Only this class has the self-interest to do it and can unite around it the oppressed peoples as a whole and other potential allies.

Alliance with the African-American people as a whole as the strongest of the nationally oppressed, alliance with all nationally oppressed peoples, alliance with all potentially anti-monopoly strata—this is the necessary strategy for victory.

Today we see a stepped up racist drive. This arises from the growing difficulties of the dominant, more reactionary circles of monopoly capital, difficulties both domestically and compared to its imperialist competitors, and the new upsurge they expect from the socialist world as a result of its renewal.

We have seen this drive during the Reagan years and now under the Bush Administration, despite his softer words. The cutting of social welfare programs, the attack on affirmative action now stepped-up by the Reagan Supreme Court, the attack on workers' living standards by the Administration and the monopolies, have

succeeded in driving down real wages and standards for all workers, but much more so for the nationally oppressed groups. The Bush campaign's "Willie Horton" TV ad was unadulterated racism and it had an impact.

These same forces seek to pit the nationally oppressed against one another. They make minor concessions to Cubans in Florida to pit them against African-Americans and Central Americans to keep them all oppressed. With small concessions they try to build up their "favored oppressed people" here and there in order to make it easier to preserve the total system of national oppression and class exploitation.

These efforts, especially to stimulate racism among whites, are not without some successes. Racist violence against all the nationally oppressed, especially against those whose physical appearance permits easy identification, has been growing. There have been the attacks in Detroit on Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, and on Arab peoples; in New Jersey on Asian Indians; on a Vietnamese in Davis, California, etc.

There are increasing attacks against Jewish Americans. We do not consider the Jewish people as nationally oppressed, but anti-Semitic violence is on the rise. The violence is also caused by heightened activity of the KKK, Aryan Nation, racist skinheads, and others who are receiving increased funds.

Petty bourgeois strata and more backward unorganized workers are involved, especially where job security is the lowest, among youth. They are more susceptible to being misled as to the cause of their problems and who the enemy is.

Organized crime also plays a role in the racist violence. There are also political assassinations and bombings carried out by intelligence agencies and death squads from countries of origin, as in the Salvadoran community, and by U.S. fascist elements against Palestinians.

At the same time, the main trend among white working people is positive, at least with respect to the African-American people. The polls, including that of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and our own experiences, confirm that there is now an anti-racist majority, that is, a majority who consider themselves anti-racist. These are people who consider racism bad, that the African-American people do not live in conditions of equality, that "something should be done

about it" and who now favor increased government spending for social welfare programs. That does not mean they are not influenced by racism or that they cannot be won by racists to the wrong side on specific issues. They are especially influenced in the wrong direction on housing and crime issues, for example.

But this turning point was reached only recently. Before that the majority were either actively or passively hostile to equality and believed the conditions of Black people were inferior because they "deserved it."

The change among white working people has come as a result of admiration for the civil rights movement of the 1960's, experience of their own economic insecurity and decline of living standards since the mid-1970's. This often placed them in the same employment and welfare lines with the nationally oppressed. Some have had common strike-struggle experiences. There were the experiences of the 1982 and subsequent elections, when white workers in their majority stood against Reaganism, cheering, too, the 90 percent African-American majority against him. There have also been the experiences of the Jackson-for-President campaign (50 percent of his 7 million votes came from whites), the anti-apartheid movement, the influence of a rapidly growing worldwide opposition to all social injustice, etc.

There are, of course, further turning points that will have to be passed by white working people, such as becoming consistently and actively anti-racist, for equality and for unity. If we were wrongly to estimate the white majority as neutral or even pro-racist, such an estimate would weaken our struggle to move them. We would estimate them as unmovable and, therefore, make less effort to win their support for concrete equality demands. We would distribute our press and circulate our petitions only among the nationally oppressed. We would fail to use their general opposition to racism and support for equality to help overcome their backwardness on some concrete issues. We would make it easier for the racists.

WWe have discussed racism and the attitudes of white people toward African Americans because there are fewer polls, studies and similar specific information available in relation to other oppressed peoples. Does our estimate of an anti-

racist majority hold up when applied to the other nationally oppressed peoples?

The nationally oppressed, at different tempos for different peoples and on different issues, are moving in a more progressive direction, reflecting changing mass thought patterns and helping to create them. This has been evidenced in the Jesse Jackson campaign, Rainbow Coalition and local elections. It is shown in trade union struggles and many community struggles, in the emergence of a myriad of general and specific equality issues. It appears in student, occupational and cultural organizations that take up social struggle issues in virtually all the nationally oppressed communities. How do we assess this in terms of each of the specific nationally oppressed communities?

The Party has an outstanding history in the struggle against national oppression and racism and for equality. We continue to make many important contributions all over the country. There is even recently some improvement as a result of criticism and self-criticism. But we are not satisfied that we are doing as much as we can in the mass struggle, or are we as sensitive internally as the times call for in terms of public image, of full acceptance of nationally oppressed persons in any and all kinds of leadership posts, in recruiting among all nationally oppressed, etc.

From our white comrades we want more mass initiatives among white working people and that they deal with expressions of insensitivity. We expect more response from nationally oppressed comrades to the influence of nationalism.

All of this should result in winning more members from the various nationally oppressed peoples.

We are determined to strengthen ideological and educational work in these areas and, with that, to help bring our practice fully in line with the requirements of the times. That is a large part of what this Ideological Conference is all about.

It is clear that even considering our small size and limited resources, we are not paying enough attention to the oppressed peoples under consideration here and we do not have organizational structures as yet to begin to overcome this. After this Conference the National Board needs to carefully examine how to change this situation and put us on the high road. □

IDEOLOGY AND THE ECOLOGICAL GLOBAL PROBLEM

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Member of the State Committee

Washington State Communist Party

Report to the Conference panel on "Ideology and Global Problems, Particularly the Ecology"

In his guidelines for this conference, Comrade Hall said we should not hesitate to break new ground. New ground does need to be broken on the subject of this workshop. It is an honor to be the one to start the process. Please listen critically and be ready to elevate the economics, pounce on the politics, generate creative collective discussion. That will be the only way to ensure that we not only break new ground but plow a straight furrow.

I propose to use "global" in the sense of the globe as a biosphere, as the living environment that provides life support for all humanity. Looked at in this way, one economic and political problem after another will prove to have a significant environmental dimension, and every environmental problem political and economic dimensions.

We know that the basis of capitalism is private ownership and that the engine of capitalism is profit. But our attention has been directed toward what this means for the exploitation of labor. What about the exploitation of the environment?

I defined exploitation of the environment in my January *Political Affairs* article. Here I want to change it slightly. Perhaps others can improve it further. My working definition is: *The exploitation of the environment is the expropriation of land, natural materials, and energy sources at one end of the production process and of the waste-absorbing capacity of the environment at the other end without paying the cost of maintaining the capability of the environment to continue supplying the one or to continue absorbing the other.*

Capitalist production assumes a simple progression: exploit nature, exploit labor, sell at a profit, dump the waste. Such a progression cannot go on forever. Carry the bucket back to nature often enough and eventually there will be nothing left to put in it. At the other end, there will no longer be an "away" in which to throw it.

Using nature for profit, not for life, impoverishes the world and threatens it with irreversible damage. As long as people live, they recreate labor power and therefore value. For nature to continue to recreate value, its resources must be continually cared for and renewed.

We could call this opening report "Back to Nature With Marx."

Marx said,

Capitalist production . . . disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil . . . But while upsetting the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of that circulation of matter, it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production and under a form appropriate to the full development of the human race. (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol 1, International Publishers, 1967, 505-6)

Humanity took a great step forward when it was discovered that people could not only use nature as all animals do, but could also change it. But our relationship with nature is a dialectical one. Progress in moving from subsistence to plenty can turn into its opposite when nature's laws are ignored. Exxon shows how with its greasy smear across the face of Alaska.

We don't have to abandon science and technology and engage in a "back to nature" movement that seeks to recreate pre-capitalist conditions. We do have to go back to nature in order to understand nature's laws for the "maintenance of the circulation of matter" between humans and the ecosystem that supports them, to find ways to make these laws the "regulating guide to social production."

It is appropriate in another way to speak of going *back* to nature, because we in the U.S. Party, and our comrades in socialist countries, too, have for years forgotten that Engels told us that we do not rule over nature like a conqueror,

like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature and exist in its midst, and . . . all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other beings of being able to know and correctly apply its laws. (Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, International Publishers, 1963, 292)

So entranced did some Soviet technologists become with unending progress that they thought they were headed right out of the biosphere into what they called a "noosphere" where

humans would no longer be dependent on nature. This theory was never accepted by most Soviet scientists. I cite it to show how ignoring nature's laws is also to ignore Marxism, a trend that has been present in our ranks, too.

Environmental problems now receive attention in our Party press; the environmental movement has become part of the litany we recite when we speak of people's movements. Yet we still do not have an environmental program and Communists seldom play an important part in environmental struggles.

Environmental problems have now become so severe and have produced such intense concern in our own country and on a world scale, that if we don't come to grips with this subject, potential recruits and potential allies may bypass us as irrelevant. That would be tragic, because Marxism puts the tool in our hands that can unravel the tangled knot of contradictions making up this global problem.

Marx did not simply tell us social production should be regulated in a way compatible with nature. He told us, in general, how to get there: by way of the class struggle, but only in general. Enormous changes have taken place since his day in human/environment relations. It is up to us to integrate this goal into our program, the necessary specific struggles into our work.

The title of this workshop is "Global Problems, Particularly the Ecology." Ecology is not a problem, of course. It is part of the solution. It is the branch of biological science which deals with the relation between living organisms and their environment. It is the tool that will help us understand nature. Our Marxist social science is the tool that will show us how this relationship is imbedded in social and economic relations and therefore in class struggle.

Environmentally destructive decisions are not made with evil intent toward the environment, but neither are they random decisions. They are the by-product of decisions made with other goals in mind, ignoring the need for environmental protection and renewal.

Under capitalism, the power to make these decisions is in the hands of the corporations who own the natural resources, the banks that provide the financing, the agencies of a government that is—with the exceptions we the people manage to impose—run by these same corporations and banks. The goal of the decision-making is the

maximization of profit and the preservation of the profit system.

In its monopoly stage, its stage of advanced imperialism, the drive is more and more for high profits in the short term. This exacerbates the pressure on the environment. Profits are maximized by whatever means is available, including new and more destructive technologies. They are maximized by moving into whatever part of the globe offers the least restrictions on the exploitation of labor and the exploitation of the environment.

As Marx said,

Capitalist production develops technology and the combining together of various processes into a social whole; only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the laborer. (Marx, *ibid*)

This process is now reaching the point where the changes taking place are escaping our ability to control them and nature's ability to repair and renew itself. Unless we refocus on comprehending the source of our life and on working with, instead of against nature, there are some bad times ahead for humanity.

Could they be so serious as to destroy the potential for the survival of our own human species, even without going to war? It's not impossible, if we unwittingly set in motion an irreversible chain of actions and reactions. But doomsday scenarios are difficult to construct with any confidence, except in the case of nuclear war, and they are not very helpful. They tend to put things in an either-or framework: if we can't survive we are all dead; if we can survive, we were worrying for nothing.

What is important is to understand the real, immediate problems which can cause immense suffering short of ultimate disaster: deserts where there were once forests, starvation where there was once plenty, heat where there was once cold, poison where there was once health. What is important is to understand the real, immediate steps that can be taken to avoid catastrophe and to begin moving in a positive direction.

Exactly what are the principal ways capitalist economics, technology and political organization combine to sap our natural wealth? How are the natural mechanisms of the circulation of matter Marx speaks of between humans and their environment distorted, and our planet's natural wealth destroyed?

DEPLETION ■ Coal, oil, and natural gas and uranium are being depleted. Once used, these sources of energy cannot be reconstituted. They *cannot* be recirculated and returned to the environment.

Minerals such as iron, tin, copper, manganese, titanium, are also being depleted as raw materials for the manufacture of thousands of products. Processed, sold, used, and then discarded, they become pollutants of land and water.

Renewable resources, too, are being depleted—forests are a prime example. Trees, once cut, will be replaced by a new generation only if conditions permit.

Spanish planters burned down forests on the slopes of Cuban mountains to obtain ashes to fertilize one generation of profitable coffee trees, leaving the soil exposed to tropical rain, which washed the soil away, leaving bare rock.

Engels used that experience to show that, "In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the first, tangible success." (Ibid, 296) That is to say, the first tangible profit.

And in our own day, the land barons and the exporters and importers of cotton, coffee, sugar, and beef from Nicaragua and El Salvador have destroyed the tropical forests. Campesinos were forced to overwork the remaining soil to scratch out an inadequate diet. One of the reasons the patience of the people with the long years of oppression finally culminated in revolution, was this destruction of the very basis of their most elemental needs. And now they are met with the intentional destruction of what forest is left by counterrevolutionaries, financed and supported by the capitalist-imperialist system that caused the problem in the first place. A conscious decision has been taken by the U.S.-supported government in El Salvador to destroy what forests are left, because they shelter the guerrillas—the same policy the Nazis followed in World War II in Byelorussia. The same policy the U.S. followed with the defoliation of Vietnamese forests.

Forests are being replaced by cities, freeways, parking lots, agriculture for the market, agriculture for subsistence. But even when timber companies replant, regeneration is not assured. A tree farm is not a forest. Like a farm

crop, tree crops can exhaust the soil if a forest ecosystem with its natural nutrients is destroyed.

We do not always know what importance to attach to any one of the many plant and animal species that make up an ecosystem. We do know the diversity of species is important, and it is being depleted at an alarming rate.

The importance of maintaining this diversity and the way it can be affected by capitalist economics and politics was illuminated in a recent issue of *The Nation*:

Nicaragua, like virtually every other nation on the planet has grown dependent on hybrid seeds of "high-yield variety," which are developed and sold by a handful of multinational corporations. . . . Once the hybrid seeds become widely used, native plant strains become extinct, and unless a special effort is made to preserve indigenous varieties, the entire genetic heritage of an agricultural region may disappear in a single season.

However, the vulnerability of an agricultural system that relies on a handful of high-yield varieties (has been) demonstrated . . . (and) the importance of maintaining a reservoir of genetic material from which new hybrids can be developed as a hedge against disasters. . . . The Dept. of Agriculture's vast seed bank in Fort Collins, Colorado . . . contains samples of native varieties from every region of the world, including many that are now extinct in their countries of origin. A great many . . . originated in Central America.

Nicaragua has recognized that the drive toward agricultural self-sufficiency means preserving and in some cases recovering its indigenous seed varieties. Unfortunately, many of those strains can now be found only at Fort Collins—and their return to Nicaragua is barred under the embargo. (Bill Weinberg, "Bad Seeds in Nicaragua," *The Nation*, July 10, 1989).

POLLUTION ■ Our natural wealth is also being sapped by pollution. Some kinds of pollution are intentionally added to the environment — agricultural chemicals, for example. Some pollutants are unwanted—often unexpected—and sometimes highly toxic by-products of industrial products and processes of many kinds. And finally, some are the end-products of manufacture and use—the waste, the garbage.

Pollution poisons our air, our water, our soil in ways which affect people's health. It also interferes with the natural cycles that keep things in balance in nature. Certain kinds of pollution are

interfering so significantly with the balance in the upper atmosphere that the so-called "greenhouse effect" is producing a warming trend which will—if not reversed—change our climate in ways that can disrupt our crops and swamp our coastlines. The cycle that produces and destroys ozone, keeping it in balance has been disrupted, too, interfering with the ozone layer which protects us from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Green plants, and especially those great complex collections of green plants we call forests, stand at a crucial intersection of the energy, oxygen, carbon, water, and nutrient cycles. The destruction of the Amazonian rain forest is much in the news these days. That problem is all the more serious because so much of the world's forest is already gone.

As the saying is, "What goes around, comes around." If the rain forests go, taking away their partial protection against the "greenhouse effect" and the climate in our northern temperate zone warms a few degrees, it may be too great a change for the forests of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Proponents of nuclear energy are suggesting that because much of the greenhouse effect is caused by the burning of fossil fuel, "clean" nuclear energy should replace it. That would take us out of the fossil-fuel frying pan into the nuclear fire.

Nuclear energy adds components to the environment that cannot be dealt with by natural processes, at least not on a time scale that makes them humanly manageable. Another kind of high technology, the petrochemical industry, has similar problems. Among its products are the plastics that are so ubiquitous in our lives and in our garbage.

The single greatest global environmental problem is war: nuclear, chemical and biological, so-called conventional war and the preparations for all of them. It is the most massive depleter, the greatest polluter, the most frightful disrupter of natural life cycles. Always destructive of human life, human societies and human environment, recovery from nuclear war would now be impossible. From other forms of war it is increasingly slow and difficult.

Even preparations for war waste environmental and human resources on a vast scale, distort scientific and technological progress, and deplete both renewable and non-renewable

resources without creating any use value whatsoever. In my own state, military installations and military production have contaminated wasteland of hundreds of square miles of land.

CHANGING COURSE ■ We need to change course, then. What are the ecological imperatives? (Leaving aside for the moment the social means of achieving them.)

The lower our stocks of non-renewable resources get, the more difficult and expensive it becomes to obtain what is left. Eventually, they will be exhausted. While they are still plentiful, we must begin the turn to renewable energy: water, wind, bio-mass and especially the direct energy of the sun, doing the research and development that can, in an orderly fashion, make the transition to a system that does not pollute and that permits constant recirculation and renewal.

We must cherish and foster the ecosystem that can continue to produce renewable resources season after season, lifetime after lifetime.

We must recycle and reuse all our precious resources. Recycling of household trash is not a middleclass fad. It is a fundamental necessity. Burying it uses up precious land, pollutes that land and the ground water. Burning the trash pollutes the air. Yet as much as 84 percent of household trash can be recycled. (Barry Commoner, "Facing the Public; the Cost of Failure," presented at GRCDA 26th Annual International Solid Waste Exhibition, Baltimore, Md., August 24, 1988)

Pollution control is much like arms control, which has put ceilings on some weapons, reining in one branch of the arms race while new and more deadly weapons are developed. Twenty years of effort has in most cases succeeded only in slightly reducing certain pollutants. Most U.S. rivers show no change in pollution levels, in spite of the Clean Water Act. Almost 15 percent have deteriorated further, and only 13 percent have improved. Of the five major air pollutants, one has worsened, the other four have been reduced by small amounts.

Only when efforts were made to *prevent* pollution rather than merely to control it, were there substantial improvements.

We no longer contaminate the bodies of our children with strontium 90, not because there is a government standard to permit only so much

strontium 90, but because public pressure forced an end to atmospheric nuclear testing. DDT was not reduced to some so-called "acceptable" level. It was banned.

SOCIAL CHANGE ■ Important as it is, removing pollutants one by one is not enough. We clean up DDT to pollute with alar, clean up a lake and pollute a sound, clean up a sound and pollute an ocean. While we take care of what is coming out one end of the pipe, a whole new collection of waste comes in at the other. We must get to the root causes: private ownership and pursuit of profit.

Socialism works for people instead of profits, but experience since 1917 has shown that while socialism is necessary, it is not sufficient. A socialist country that must defend itself is forced into war production. Highly desirable production goals can be pursued in environmentally destructive ways. In the last analysis, the use of nature's laws as a regulating guide to social production means making environmental exploitation as impermissible as socialist countries have made the exploitation of labor.

There are new winds blowing in the Soviet Union that bode well not only for that country, but for the world. Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations was historic for his environmental as well as his disarmament proposals.

"International economic security is inconceivable," he said, "unless related not only to disarmament but also to the elimination of the threat to the world's environment."

He pointed to "the need to search for a fundamentally new type of industrial progress—one that would meet the interests of all peoples and states," and to development for developing countries not on the basis of "the old technological pattern" but on the basis of "environmentally clean production."

Our earlier Central American examples indicate that environmental issues will be an integral part of the struggles now building in the developing world. These countries still have many people who extract a living from a small piece of land. Even when, in a technical sense, they are owners, most of them work and live—or lose their ability to work and live—under conditions determined by distant capitalists and financiers.

Multinational corporations and banks have discovered that it is not necessary to own every-

thing outright. It is only necessary to own some controlling share, or to keep an entire country in debt to plunder its environment and keep the profits flowing out of the country and into the pockets of investors. This suggests a new basis for an alliance between workers and peasants, country by country and worldwide.

Throughout the world attention to environmental problems is rising. That includes the problem of inequitable ownership and use of natural resources. The recent success of the Greens in the European parliamentary elections, the World Conference in Managua, reported in the *People's Daily World* are indications. The World Commission on Environment and Development, set up by the United Nations issued a significant report in 1987 called *Our Common Future* (Oxford University Press, 1987). There will be a UN conference on the subject in 1992.

Meanwhile, back at the USA ranch, we have to rope and tie a new approach to environmental problems while the ranch is still in capitalist hands. The first step is to look at the class lineup. Those who own the natural resources, and who exploit both labor and environment stand on one side of a class dividing line.

Considering that they themselves and their own system are endangered, cannot some owners see their interests as humans rather than members of a class?

Occasional individual capitalists can take a good position on an environmental issue. Like some of the former Cold Warriors who are now on the right side of some peace issues, they are a mixed blessing, as a couple of the pieces in *Party Builder* pointed out. We have to be ready to work with them when it is possible, but not allow them to become an obstacle to developing the struggle's full potential.

One reason they will remain few is that companies which destroy their own base in timber find forests abroad, or move into oil. Oil companies move into publishing and television, manufacturers into real estate. It is not until far down the slippery road to destruction that the danger looms large for the ruling class as a whole.

Family farmers, small and medium business people who are not engaged in production or in aspects of production not heavily polluting, are more numerous and more dependable allies.

But for all its global spread and humanity-wide impact, pollution bears most heavily on the

living and working environments of working class and nationally oppressed groups here and in developing countries abroad.

The moving force for environmental progress is the working class as a whole. It is made up of the vast majority of humanity who have been robbed of their human birthright—the right to the resources, the environment that sustains life.

It includes farm workers, service workers, professional workers, all those who work for wages or salaries except the few who have been able to buy into the system and thereby share in a small way in its ownership. (For an excellent recent discussion of class divisions, see Michael Parenti, "The Stampede from Class," *Nature, Society and Thought*, 2, No. 2, 1989)

Environmental exploitation is both broadening and sharpening the class struggle. Salaried and self-employed professionals, for whom questions of class are muted or obscured in their work relationships, come face to face with the implications of private ownership when they become involved in environmental struggles.

The link between private ownership and environmental degradation becomes obvious when people try to affect the production process. In my part of the country, there is currently great concern about the rate the timber companies are cutting the forests. Timber, fish and wildlife resources are now being discussed among state agencies, community representatives, environmental organizations and Native American Indian Nations. (There is no place at the table for timber unions, but there should be.)

When the rate of harvest is mentioned, the barrier goes up: "This is private property," the company representatives say, "only we make this kind of decision."

Nor is it necessary to be involved in the struggle to learn this lesson today—although struggle is, of course, the best teacher. Pick up almost any newspaper and get a lesson courtesy of Exxon on who is responsible for environmental problems and why. Tomorrow it may be another corporation exemplifying the breakdown of the system vis-a-vis the environment.

Since private ownership is central to environmental issues, and is also central to the capitalist system, environment has revolutionary implications. It does not create a revolutionary situation by itself, but the implications are there.

Why did the Party grow so rapidly in the depression years? One reason was that the system had broken down. It could not provide people with the basic necessities of life. People were therefore attracted to a Party dedicated to change what was not a viable system. A system that cannot maintain the ecosystems that sustain life is not a viable system.

Within the broad struggle, industrial workers remain central. We must take a closer look at them, however, in relation to the environment. Not only must they sell their labor power to the owners of the means of production. Not only are they subject to hazardous work environments. They must sell their labor power to corporations that use it for the purpose of further polluting and destroying the earth. It is most obvious in war industry, but it is true in coal, in chemical, in nuclear, in auto, in one industry after another. The industrial working class is held hostage to the destructive power and purposes of capitalism.

Workers are not just being alienated from their work and alienated from nature. They are forced to contribute their work to the system that is destructive of their future.

The right to a job is a basic class struggle issue. In the context of war preparations and environmental degradation, we have to go beyond calling for the demand for jobs with a human potential, jobs for a peaceful and healthy future.

The right to a job with a human purpose has already surfaced in Jobs for Peace, Jobs with Justice, conversion to a peacetime economy. Shouldn't we add to that, Jobs in the Future—the right to maintain and protect the jobs base in the environment?

Without a conscious, aggressive policy with this direction, the industrial working class is vulnerable to the identification of the worker with the industry. The bosses press in that direction with every means at their disposal. Environmentalists often ignore the jobs problem, or even blame the workers along with the company. Workers sometimes identify with industry as seemingly the only way to defend their jobs. These trends are wrong and divisive but pervasive and far from easy to deal with.

We made a stab at this problem in our district two years ago with a Party statement on the jobs issue at the Hanford nuclear reservation. We defended the right of workers there to jobs,

pointing out that the Tri-Cities area that serves Hanford was built out of small rural towns by the Federal government and the corporations that have operated the nuclear plants. We supported jobs both in cleaning up the contamination of years—which environmentalists and peace activists have urged—and in proposing the reorientation of the complex to research and development of renewable energy.

Now we have the problem in the timber industry. As the timber companies rush to cut it all, they endanger the future of the forest and therefore the future of logging and milling jobs. They pit workers and environmentalists against one another.

Environmentalists are using protection of an endangered species, the spotted owl, to preserve some pieces of the forest ecosystem. Timber companies make the issue bird against human, environmental preservation against jobs. Another facet of the issue is the question of the export of logs. High profits there are one of the factors driving the increase in the rate of harvest. Logs are not containerized and therefore require more work on the waterfront than does finished lumber. This brings in the longshoremen too and pits one union against another. Mill workers' jobs are tied to processing the logs.

We will be faced increasingly with issues of this kind in every district, nationally and internationally. In coping with them, we will find that we always need both Marxism and natural science. We cannot become ecologists or specialists in other disciplines overnight. We do have scientists in our own ranks and we can seek out others who have both the ability and the willingness to put their science at the service of the movement for change. We need an environmental editor on the *PDW* staff who can become knowledgeable on a journalistic level and can help make the connections between the movement and the scientists.

Changes can be forced by an aroused public opinion and a vigorous struggle. Capitalists and capitalist governments are most likely to give in when they can see ways of accomplishing a change without interfering significantly with their profits, or can load the cost of change on the backs of the non-owning classes. But always their drive for profit tends to force changes into the narrowest of channels, the most immediate but impermanent of ameliorating processes.

Our trend must be in the other direction: using every struggle, won or lost, to move into wider channels, more permanent solutions and exposure of the roots of the problem.

There will be struggles in which environment is at the core or in the front, but we are not talking just about a new arena of struggle. Movements we are involved in already increasingly have a new environmental dimension: The fight for jobs, for workplace safety, for decent living conditions, for justice on the world scale, for an end to the disproportionate impact of capitalism on the nationally oppressed, even against the crushing Third World debt which is giving impetus to quicker destruction of the environment.

The environmental movement needs a Marxist understanding of the class struggle. The union movement needs a Marxist understanding of the environment. The two need to be brought together with each other and with the other growing people's majorities. Our Party must work to make this connection. □

CULTURE IS A FORCE IN THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Alice Sunshine,

Arts and Entertainment Editor,
The People's Daily World

Report to the Conference panel on "Ideological Trends and Developments in the Cultural Arena"

When we talk about culture, we confront a huge body of social activity. Culture covers everything from how we eat to the abstract expression of our deepest thoughts and feelings. For the purpose of this panel, let's talk about the aspects of culture related to the media, artistic expression and popular entertainment. That gives us a vast topic to probe, to examine how culture operates in the U.S. and how we respond to it.

Art both reflects and helps shape the consciousness of people living in a particular society. For example, the violence in TV, movies and other forms of mass culture reflects the violence that the artists see in our U.S. society.

The same holds true for racist values, male supremacy, anti-worker attitudes, anti-communism and so on. It is important to study this and

many scholars and media watchers are doing so. Art also reflects positive developments in social consciousness. After 10 years of Reaganism, there are increasingly sharp contradictions in popular music and film. But how art operates to affect or shape people's consciousness is an even more complex and compelling issue.

Soviet scholar O.A. Makarov, in a collection of essays, *Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics and the Arts*, writes that one of the characteristics of art as an ideological phenomenon is "its orientation of the reader, viewer or listener towards a certain perception of the world and a certain type of civic behavior, and the bringing up of socially active people. . . . [This] factor serves as the main indicator of the ideological activity of art."

Thus, art works to shape the social consciousness of people. But there is no inherent quality in art that automatically determines what type of social consciousness that is going to be. At one end, as Angela Davis said at a *Political Affairs* forum on "Marxism and the Arts" in 1985, it can "potentially awaken an urge in those who are affected by it to transform creatively the dehumanizing realities surrounding them. Art can function as a sensitizer and a catalyst, propelling people in the direction of involvement in organized movements striving for radical social change." This is the function working-class culture can serve in class struggle.

At the other end, art, especially forms of mass culture, can instill strong messages of social control by the ruling class. Michael Parenti eloquently stated the case for this function of bourgeois culture in his book *Inventing Reality* when he wrote, "The worst forms of tyranny—or certainly the most successful ones—are not those we rail against but those that so insinuate themselves into the imagery of our consciousness and the fabric of our lives as not to be perceived as tyranny."

Either way it goes, the point forcefully evoked by these comments is that culture is itself politics and a critically important part, not to be underestimated. For those involved in cultural work it directly poses the question, "How do progressive cultural workers participate in political struggle?"

To understand the problems of the cultural worker in the U.S., let's look at how monopoly capitalism currently operates in the produc-

tion of the cultural commodity. Late last year, I interviewed two independent Chicano filmmakers who had just completed a movie on a progressive theme. They had overcome great difficulties to raise the money to finance the movie, to make the arrangements for the actors and sets, to obtain the proper equipment and crew.

To some, the fact the movie could get made at all was proof that, with determination, anyone can produce their art in this country. But these filmmakers found the biggest obstacle still ahead. Censorship faced them—not in the making of the movie but in getting it shown. Monopoly of the means of distribution turned out to be the decisive tool of ruling class control. Actually, monopoly control of all phases of production and circulation of artistic products is rapidly increasing throughout the capitalist world.

Even while the scientific-technological revolution is providing devices that would seem to empower more people to enter into creative production, that is not necessarily the case. During the early phases of introducing video cassette recorders, satellite TV and cable TV, it seemed as though there was an expansion of access to cultural products. But like most other technologies under capitalism, the early uncontrolled phase of competition is quickly stomped by the big foot of monopoly as soon as it starts to use the economics of large-scale production to gather the new technologies into its orbit. For decades, media observers have noted the increasingly centralized control of news, literary and entertainment outlets as newspaper as bought magazines, as magazines bought TV stations, as radio stations were strung into networks, and even as billboard companies were bought by media chains.

Lately, in mega-merger style, it appears a critical hurdle looms ahead. There's an intense and fascinating struggle being waged over the centralization of all media products into just a few hands. In a recent speech to the Commonwealth Club, Dean Ben Bagdikian of the University of California at Berkeley, commented,

Today, media mergers involve multiples of billions of dollars and dozens of subsidiaries in every medium. In the current Time-Warner-Paramount battle there is more than 25 billion dollars being tossed about affecting the fate of dozens of large and established media operations that together reach the whole population with repetitive intensity.

According to Bagdikian's research, in 1982 fifty corporations controlled almost all the business in the major media. Seven years later, today, that is down to fewer than 25. And the concentration is still spinning in a frenzy of buyouts.

In a recent article in *The Nation* on the same topic, Bagdikian wrote,

Most of them confidently announce that by the 1990s they—five to ten corporate giants—will control most of the world's important newspapers, magazines, books, broadcast stations, movies, recordings and videocassettes. Moreover, each of these planetary corporations plans to gather under its control every step in the information process from creation of the product to all the various means by which modern technology delivers media messages to the public. The product is news, information, ideas, entertainment and popular culture; the public is the whole world.

Naturally, what drives the concentration of media firms is what drives other corporations—profits. Established media firms have high profits and lots of free cash for buying up others. The banks that finance the buyouts are also up to their ears in green as a result of merger mania.

But profit is not the whole story. Christopher Shaw, a media merger specialist with the Anspacher banking firm, recently told a group of investors there are two reasons for buying media outlets. Profitability is one, but the other is "influence."

Among the main losers in media mergers have been the workers laid-off due to the combining of enterprises and the imposition of lowered quality standards. Witness the cuts imposed by General Electric after it bought NBC-TV. That led to the NABET (National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians) strike when the "pinheads at GE," as David Letterman likes to call them, decided to cut production crews. The other main losers are those who look for a quality cultural product as producers move toward what Bagdikian calls "generic news and entertainment." He explains,

Big firms with several media can use the same product over and over in their news, their entertainment programs, their movies, their books and so forth. So our media products are becoming more uniform than in the past.

Newspapers are more alike each year. The TV

networks are almost indistinguishable in content. Each year cable looks more like TV.

Since major book publishers have been bought by conglomerate firms, the major houses have reduced the number of titles issued each year in order to concentrate on blockbuster books that will also be usable as TV programs and recordings. Twenty years ago, recording companies issued 4,300 new albums a year. By the early 1980s, with consolidation of ownership, it had dropped to 2,300.

Today's cultural worker faces an intensification of what Karl Marx wrote about in *The German Ideology* more than 100 years ago. Commenting on the situation of the painter Raphael during the early phase of Italian mercantile society, he wrote,

Raphael as much as any other artist was determined by the technical advances of the society made before him, by the organization of society and the division of labor in his locality and finally by the division of labor in all the countries with which his locality had intercourse. Whether an individual like Raphael succeeds in developing his talent depends wholly on demand, which in turn depends on the division of labor and the conditions of human culture resulting from it. (Collected Works, Vol. 5, 393)

If cultural workers in general find the going very tough, for the politically progressive working-class cultural worker the challenge is even greater. That does not mean there are no examples that filter through into mass culture. There has been a resurgence of folk/rock fusion music with strong social protest content issued on major labels by artists like Tracy Chapman, Lou Reed, Billy Bragg and Bruce Cockburn.

Some, such as Bruce Springsteen, U2 and others on the *Vision Shared* album, have revived working-class classics. These artists and many other big names have participated in all kinds of huge concert benefits for causes, including AIDS research, the homeless, farmers, famine relief and freedom for political prisoners.

The anti-Reagan upsurge, the Jackson campaign, developments in Central America and the anti-apartheid movement have all influenced these artists. In fact these mass movements have been nearly unavoidable for artists seeking mass followings.

The peace movement, especially the initiatives by the Soviet Union, have also had an im-

pact. Nearly every big name in rock music has played at least one socialist country. MTV is currently running a contest to send two lucky rockers to a two-day peace concert in Moscow later this year.

Rap music, which started as a street phenomenon, forced its way into the established music world, and won a Grammy category for the first time last year, also has a lot of social protest content. It reflects the life conditions of African-American youth living in poverty, hopelessness, drugs and unemployment. However, the trends there are also mixed, as the record companies work to rein in the content.

Grand Master Flash, the first rap group to come hot onto the national scene (with words like: "It's like a jungle sometimes/ it makes me wonder/ how I keep from goin' under") rapped on life and survival. Many other rappers followed suit. But later groups got away from these themes to rely more on love, at best, and crude sex and strong language, at worst, rather than politics.

The strongest rap group on the scene, Public Enemy, used political lyrics in nearly every song. It helped revive the awareness of many young people, especially to the contributions of Malcolm X. This group has recently broken up in the wake of alleged anti-Semitic remarks (not in the music) by one of its members. Despite a strong repudiation by the rest of the group, the record company pulled its contract about a week before release of the movie *Do The Right Thing*, which features their most political song to date, *Fight the Power*.

In film, there are many examples of political/socially responsible themes. The hottest item and most important, I think in years, is *Do The Right Thing*, which was released two weeks ago and is evoking wide discussion on racism across the country. It may indicate an opening in Hollywood to political themes and opposition to racism. It must be noted that the film was independently produced and only later picked up for distribution by Universal Studios.

Other movies also have had positive social themes, like John Carpenter's *They Live*, which makes heroes of the homeless and unemployed; *Dead Poet's Society*, which advocates youth pursuit of intellectual freedom; and some of the movies on Vietnam, like *Platoon*, which carry

anti-war themes. Such movies press against the acceptable parameters of cinema subject matter.

But we should be careful not to overestimate any opening to social content in Hollywood. The overwhelming number of movies, TV programs and cable shows are still typically anti-social, short on characterization, and full of stereotypes and male supremacy. And that does not even begin to touch the most grotesque product of capitalist culture—advertising.

One example of an opening that is new and which we need to study, is the impact of the Writers Guild of America strike last year. The Writers Guild has suffered years of declining membership and employer attacks, not to mention the problem of recovery from the jailing of its leaders and the terror imposed against its members during the 1950s.

There are strong signs, however, that the production companies pushed the writers too far last year and the result of the strike has been invigoration of the union. Its membership is more union-conscious, attendance at meetings and union events is way up, and the union is taking initiatives on other issues. One such step was the release in May of a study on hiring discrimination against women, and minority and older writers. There is on-going discussion on how to tackle a struggle for affirmative action.

Another side effect of the writers' strike was the appearance of pro-worker episodes on several popular TV series. While there is no evidence to show the writers will be able to consistently get such material past the producers, this is one example of how important it is to wage organizing struggles in the mass entertainment production industry—not just because of labor issues, which are becoming increasingly acute, but because the character of these workers' products is also political and ideological. In dealing with an ideological product, there can be openings that are not immediately obvious in the face of strong monopoly control.

In trying to control ideas, illusions necessarily must interact with people's every day reality. If the movies and TV portray this as the best of all possible countries, with a high standard of living, then a lot of people may begin to understand that they should experience that high standard of living. This is a contradiction, and where there is

such a contradiction, a political activist can find a way to organize. Michael Parenti, at the *Political Affairs* "Conference on Marxism and the Arts" said,

Capitalist monopoly culture, like monopoly capitalist economy, suffers from internal contradictions. It can invent and control just so much of reality. Its socialization is imperfect and sometimes self-defeating.

Like any monopoly it cannot rest perfectly secure because it does not serve the people and is dedicated to the ultimately impossible task of trying to prevent history from happening. Its legitimating deceptions are soft spots of vulnerability through which democratic forces can sometimes press for greater gains. An understanding of monopoly culture shows us how difficult it is to fight capitalism on its own turf. But if I may paraphrase Lenin, sometimes that's the only turf available and we must use every platform we can get.

Now let's turn to see how we are creating alternatives to the monopoly-produced mass culture. There are many possible forms for such alternatives: community cultural centers with local theaters and art galleries; working-class and political theater and dance groups like the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the Detroit Labor Theater and the Dance Brigade in Oakland; independent filmmaking and independent theater outlets; political production venues like the Ashgrove in L.A. and La Pena in Berkeley. There are song groups like the Freedom Song Network, labor-related activities like the Labor Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C., and Bread and Roses attached to Local 1199. Some attempts already are under way to link up the many people's culture forms, for example the Alliance for Cultural Democracy, which is initiating a campaign for people's observances in 1992 of the 500th year since the arrival of Columbus in the western hemisphere.

All these alternatives work toward bringing advanced ideas to people, to preserve cultural expressions, and to provide, in varying degree, opportunities for artistic creativity, which itself can be consciousness-raising. In history, the most successful people's cultural forms, those that don't erode into marginal counterculture or expressions seeking simply shock value, are those which are connected to larger peoples' and workers' struggles. In Latin America, for example, the Chilean New Song Movement, despite official re-

pression, became a mass expression of the revolutionary process taking place.

To open our minds to the possibilities, consider Angela Davis' suggestion that we look at the 1930s WPA arts projects, which put thousands of artists to work elevating the aesthetic and consciousness levels of depression-era America. Not only did they affect the consumers of the art; they provided real opportunities for many artists, the same kinds of artists we find today living marginally and trying to find a chance to act, paint, dance, sing and write.

Many of the WPA artists later found their way into the mass entertainment production industries where they helped to organize unions. A WPA-type program could be among the demands we make when we press for peacetime conversion of war industry and for full employment programs.

The People's Daily World, considered the centerpiece of our work, should also play a role. But many of us still think the cultural role of the paper should only be to critique the individual products of mass culture, to inform people of interesting cultural events taking place or simply to be a come-on to get people to read the "really important" articles.

While all these functions are valid, I think they fall short of what a Communist newspaper needs to do in this battle for hearts and minds. We need to expose the process by which the cultural commodity is produced and manipulated, and to show how monopoly control operates. That means publishing a lot more on the nature of these industries and on the workers' struggles within them.

But the culture content of the PDW is also not exempt from Lenin's description of a newspaper as a "collective organizer . . . that facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labor." This speaks to the PDW becoming a place where cultural workers can read and write about their struggles within the mass-culture industries, as well as their efforts to create people's alternatives to that industry.

This type of coverage is difficult both to obtain and to write (it is a lot easier to go to a show and only write your opinion of it). Also, getting this type of article and making the paper avail-

able to large numbers of progressive cultural activists means a broader interpretation of art as a particular political arena, not identical to that in which we wage the usual political debate. While we must avoid liberalism and be sure to criticize capitalistic, monopoly influences, we must also not be sectarian. We should support positive developments even where there are aspects with which we disagree.

This type of thinking applies not only to the PDW, but also could enlarge the possibilities provided by our bookstores—to be visible Party venues that act as cultural, literary centers.

Our ability to tackle the tactics of working in the cultural field is shaped by how we perceive the function of culture in society. Volodya Teitlbaum, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, wrote, "We often relegate it to a secondary tool. . . . but culture is not a pair of shoes that can be changed at whim. Neither is it the spice in a hot political dish, because it is itself politics in the deepest sense of that word."

To the extent that we fully understand the meaning and power of culture in our society, we will also be able to expand our creativity in the battle of ideas. □

IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOCIALIST WORLD

Lee Dlugin

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Report to the Conference panel on "Developments in the Socialist World: Their Ideological Impact on the U.S."

Socialism and the world socialist system are at a new crossroads on the path of achieving its historic mission of fulfilling the material, cultural and spiritual aspirations of the people living within the system. It is a moment when there are many difficulties and some dangers.

There are many changes taking place in each socialist country. There is much re-evaluation of processes and problems and much struggle to make changes aimed at moving forward. There is wide ranging experimentation. Restructuring in various forms is taking place in most socialist countries based on the conditions peculiar to each situation. Greater and greater involvement

of the people in the planning and production process is taking place. This is giving new vitality to the meaning and concept of socialist democracy, and in most countries democratic participation is qualitatively increasing.

These changes and developments draw keen interest on the part of the American people, the U.S. workingclass and our Party as well. The success of these developments impacts heavily on our struggle against U.S. state monopoly capitalism. U.S. imperialism views these changes with great alarm. They fear a successful outcome and its long term impact on the outcome of the struggle between the two systems.

The totality of the experience of the past few years in the unfolding of this process shows clearly that there is no single model for developing socialism for all countries. There is a diversity of experience, a variety of organizational forms and a diversity of solution to problems. I will deal here with the Soviet Union, the most important socialist country.

The changes taking place today are predicated on the socialist principle of the public ownership of property and the absence of exploitation. It is this principle which is the basis for the concept and reality that socialism is the only system with the ability to renew itself and move forward, that it can seek and find solutions.

It is this which provides both the ability and the dynamics for progressive change, which separated it from its rival—capitalism. Under capitalism, even in change, the anarchy prevails because the nature of capitalism is for greater exploitation which leads to ever-growing hardship for the masses of people.

The scope, depth and complexity of changes in economic and political activity in the Soviet Union in particular, and the other socialist countries, are having a profound (and in general, positive) impact on the American people as a whole. Perestroika and glasnost have become household words in our country. They are more familiar to millions of Americans than terms describing historic events in our own country.

Perestroika and glasnost are deeply affecting the thinking of the American people.

Perhaps the greatest impact on life in the U.S. has been, and continues to be, the Soviet peace program with its countless initiatives and its unilateral actions to implement them. Some key points should be underscored so as to more

fully see the impact in this country.

In addition to giving important impetus to the emergence of the peace majority in our country, there is a broadening impact. There is a new and growing respect for Soviet economic planning as reflected in its conversion policy, as witnessed in the impact on William Winpisinger, Jack Sheinkman and Jesse Jackson, and the speeches they have made when they returned to the United States.

Many unions are calling for the repeal of the Baker amendment and want exchanges between themselves and their Soviet counterparts.

There is the experience only a few weeks ago of the Soviet Peace Committee delegation composed of trade unionists which was hosted here by trade unions who were more than friendly; there were genuine exchanges on questions of mutual interest.

There is a growing reliance on the success of perestroika as the basis for radical growth in U.S./U.S.S.R. trade relations and a growing movement to end trade restrictions. There is the explosion of exchanges between Soviet enterprises doing business with U.S. firms, with trade union groups in various ways, with African-American groups, with women's groups, ecologists, educators, scientific groups, peace groups and so on.

Of key importance to the U.S. working class in particular are the developments around the growth and expansion of the activity of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council. This is a direct product of the new thinking of the Soviet Union. As its activity grows the long standing slogan put forth by progressive U.S. trade unionists that "trade means jobs" will become more and more a reality and a material force in U.S. economic life. These developments help expand the internationalism of the workingclass and the need to become more fully involved in the vital political affairs of the moment. Trade also is a very important instrument for peace.

There is new respect for the humanity of the Soviet Union as expressed in the handling of the Armenian earthquake tragedy. The response from the American people was truly impressive and on all levels.

The impact of Soviet foreign policy based on disarmament, peace and cooperation, protecting and improving the ecological balances, of demili-

tarization of Europe, etc., helps to sharpen the inter-imperialist contradictions. The concept of the "Common European Home" has taken root in broad circles. It becomes increasingly difficult for U.S. imperialism to impose its hegemony on all questions over its allies. Soviet foreign policy has made Gorbachev the most popular political figure in most of the leading capitalist countries, including our own.

The perception of the Soviet Union as a society expanding its democratic process, institutions and spirit is widely welcomed among American masses.

It is the task of our Party to explain the fuller meaning of socialist democracy as it manifests itself on the shop floor, as it gives political and ideological guidance to the triple social task the Soviet have set, to solve the food question, solve the housing question, and improve the quality and distribution of consumer goods and services.

It is for us to draw the lessons and show the difference between a "law-governed society" whose aim is to maximum the standard of living and quality of life of its people and the lawless society of U.S. capitalism, which turns a decrepit drug dealing thief like Ollie North into a national hero while destroying the lives and liberties of tens of millions.

During the first two years of perestroika following the 27th Party Congress, the rate of increase in housing construction each year was equal to the total increase of the preceding three five-year plans—a total of 30 percent increase in just two years.

We must explain what makes this kind of growth possible, especially in the face of a catastrophic housing crisis in our country.

The mass response to perestroika and glasnost is a significant factor in the response to our own Party as well. The decline of anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism are clearly evident in the growing acceptance of our Party and its views in mass organizations, in the radio, newspaper and magazine proliferation of stories and interviews.

The class enemy must resort to ever more monumental lies, distortions, half truths and untruths to mask the new developments and what they portend. It sets up straw men and then proceeds to annihilate them. The main lie that continues is that socialism is dead—it never worked, is not working now and never will

work—the Big Lie, born with the October Revolution. And as Comrade Gus Hall says, there is a whole new era of propaganda of “communism being dead.” They say that the Soviets are now giving up socialism and are steering their economy toward convergence with capitalism. They are employing their biggest guns on this question—Kissinger, Brzezinski, *The New York Times*, etc., as Comrade Gus spoke of in his keynote address. They are afraid to face the future where qualitative changes take place in the Soviet Union while stagnation grips capitalism.

These lies, coupled with negative impressions created by one-sided criticism, what appears to be at times constant griping, with no solutions posed, political demagogy by some, and even off-the-wall theories gleaned from some Soviet writers, academicians, political people and opportunist headline grabbers, tend to cause some confusion among Left and progressive forces and even in our own Party. They help create fear and uncertainty about Soviet commitment to socialism and the future of socialism itself.

The actual developments and events in unfolding perestroika belie this fear, despite some of the experimentation and mistakes that are being made and will be made. It is up to us to expose the lie which gave rise to the fear.

What are some of the questions being asked among progressive forces? One group of questions concerns the direction of the economy:

- “Has the USSR given up on planning?”
- “Does the use of the market mean they have given up socialism and will capitalism develop?”
- “Are the new forms of ownership now unfolding the same as capitalist ownership?”
- “Will there be layoffs and unemployment as a result of the use of the market?”

The main strategic line of the Soviet Union today to propel it forward is the acceleration of the country’s socio-economic development—the aim of which is to double everything by the year 2000. Gorbachev, in his Main report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU, described the meaning and process of acceleration as follows:

What do we mean by acceleration? First of all, raising the rate of economic growth. But that is not all. In substance it means a new quality of growth: an all-out intensification of production on the basis of scientific and

technological progress, a structural reconstruction of the economy, effective forms of management and of organizing and stimulating labor.

In order to guarantee this process of acceleration, the fetters of the past which have held up this process must be cast off. The cutting down of the time it takes from conception of an idea to its implementation in the production process must be speeded up. It requires corrections and changes in the economic mechanism. It means moving over to self-financing of enterprises, cost accounting and self-management. This process is underway. And the results of the first two years have already shown some increases in basic indicators, but with many unresolved problems.

In his article on the acceleration process, Comrade Gus Hall described this necessary development as follows:

The process will tackle all outmoded processes that no longer correspond to the maturing of a more advanced socialist society. The process is demanding more self-discipline, more self-initiative. It is rooting out all elements of corruption and punishing those who violate socialist law.

Tn order for perestroika to proceed there must be the fullest expansion of democracy on all levels. It means first of all constant growth of the involvement of the people in planning and production decisions at the point of production.

There has been much discussion on how to do away with the alienation of the individual from the socialist ownership which led to disinterest, poor quality of work, and in many instances lowering growth rates. There are many new experimental forms to find the best means for overcoming these problems. It was recognized that first there had to be a return to the socialist principle of paying wages based on the quantity and quality of work done, and doing away with the wage leveling which stood in the way of individual initiative and creativity.

Control of enterprises is being turned over to those who work in them. In both industry and agriculture, leasing and contract arrangements, as well as the establishment of cooperatives are rapidly developing in order to increase quality and quantity of production. And there is much debate on these new forms and far from universal agreement on them.

There is some increase in productivity. Vadim Medvedev, in discussing today's socialism said:

Any economic form is good if it yields real economic and social effect, if it helps more fully to satisfy people's needs and precludes the exploitation of man by man.

Coming back to the questions raised among progressive forces: The Soviets are streamlining central planning—not giving it up. Applying the Law of the Enterprise, the central economic apparatus is being reorganized and its functions revised. The development of broad economic strategy—that is, proportions of development, structural policy, the choice of priorities, state finances, and the filling of defense needs—will continue to be centrally planned.

What will be ended is the planning of petty details. Day-to-day decisions are decentralized. Ministries are being consolidated and will supervise a whole branch as an integral system rather than supervising enterprises individually. In the process, unneeded management elements will be eliminated.

The use of the market concept is meant to be a guarantee of control over the cost of production, the quality of goods produced, and for the coordination of production with constantly changing social requirements. (This is quite the opposite of the market under capitalism, where the aim is to increase profits—not provide jobs and meet socio-economic requirements of the people.) It does not mean giving up socialism; rather to deliver on the material promise of socialism. However, there are many rough edges: there isn't yet full agreement on how the socialist market should operate, and in fact there are some Soviet economists who argue for a western style market economy, but these economists are clearly in the minority. More and more they are being taken on by Soviet leaders, including Gorbachev, Ryzhkov, Yakovlev, Ligachev, etc. There is not yet full coordination between the market and central planning, and it is important to avoid the pitfalls of some of the other socialist countries where there is an imbalance between planning and the market. As a matter of fact, no socialist country has yet achieved a balance.

These processes should make for greater production efficiency, greater use of science and

technology in production, less reliance on manual labor, elimination of various no-longer-needed managerial levels. This will result in a reduction of the necessary workforce in a given enterprise or economic branch. But this does not mean there will be unemployment with its dire consequences as we know them here. Quite the contrary. This freeing up of labor will mean they are then available to work on production of more consumer goods, of enlarging the labor pool providing services to the people.

With the development of self-sufficiency and cost accounting, those enterprises which are not efficient will have to close. The workers from these plants will be absorbed in those branches of production where they are most needed and will help to solve the acute labor shortage.

There is much economic experimentation now going on, much trial and error. Some forms won't be successful. Many problems will develop no doubt. For example, what will happen in some of the joint ventures that now can be more than 50 percent foreign owned or what will happen in the projected special economic zones?

The Soviet Union is out to develop its science and technology most rapidly, so there are some concessions being made. They will have to pay a price. The question is how to contain the price. There are temporary things, not built-in structural things. But this necessitates an ideological struggle to keep out the bourgeois baggage that comes with the capitalist dollars and technology.

Trial and error is a sign of socialist maturity—not weakness. These experiments have nothing in common with some of the outlandish and non-socialist solutions projected by some of the Soviet academic community—such as creating unemployment.

The Soviet Union was the first country to establish equality of all nations within its own borders. The affirmative action which started with the revolution continues today and in a fundamental sense still stands as the outstanding example of national liberation and the equality of nations. However, clearly there have been errors and many problems exist today.

It gives rise to the possibility of giving expression and airing of long-standing grievances in some of the republics, autonomous republics, regions and areas. Past errors resulting from the bureaucratic command methods coming from

Moscow, where decisions in general should have been made in local areas, aggravated these problems. The massive ongoing economic affirmative action was seen by the center as the main basis for the relationship between Moscow and the constituent republics. This led to insensitivity regarding the national feelings and aspirations. In addition, there was an underestimation of the influence of nationalism and inadequate ideological struggle for internationalism, leaving it to spontaneous development. Also, there was the conception that economic development would automatically develop internationalism.

The Leninist solution to the national question, the basic premise of which is full economic, social and political equality for all nations and nationalities, was not fully implemented.

Alexander Yakovlev in a speech in Lithuania said:

Much harm has been done by the idea of overall uniformity, as applied to the economy, architecture, way of life and many other things. Uniformity is akin to leveling, for it is rooted in the same bureaucratic drive for sameness, evenness and unanimity. But the country is so diverse, and its people and nations so different, that it would be impossible to reduce equality to homogeneity. On the contrary, it is the uniformity, mistaken for equality, that hurts people's feelings and humiliates everyone, without exception.

The Central Committee is planning a special meeting to discuss these questions. A special commission has been set up to prepare for this meeting and it is clear the solutions will not be simple.

All socialist countries are grappling with the problem of how to deal with their history. Frankly, to us there is sometimes a one-sided approach. As Comrade Gus Hall often points out: "You can't forget the class enemy when dealing with history."

You can't abstract events from the historical moment. The one-sidedness is used by the enemy to tarnish the image of socialism. In some Soviet writings there is not a clear understanding on what is the nature of state monopoly capitalism and its ideological premises. For example, what could lead a contemporary Soviet to say "Thank God for the USA," when dealing with problems of war and peace or a suggestion by Andrei Sakharov, a Congress deputy, to the Brit-

ish banks that they not lend the Soviet Union money because the Soviet Union is supposedly a bad risk, when it is accepted everywhere that the Soviets are the most reliable business partners.

One of the problems is that there doesn't appear to be a struggle for Communist ideology. There seems to be a great reliance on pragmatism and practical solutions to questions. There often isn't a partisan defense of socialism. And *Moscow News* isn't the only guilty newspaper. The 19th Party Conference placed emphasis on the need for ideological struggle and for finding solutions to problems.

This has been a period of great expansion of socialist democracy. In order for perestroika to fully move forward, it is necessary to have a full and wide ranging dialogue on an examination of past developments, including the distortions of socialist principles which prevented the natural growth of socialist life in all its aspects and phases.

The dialogue is taking place on all levels of Soviet life. These are not the Soviets who get *The New York Times* headlines—but they are the ones who are making the fundamental decisions. And we saw them clearly in the new Congress of People's Deputies when they rose in defense of Communist ideology. Of great significance are the solutions put forward by the trade union deputies and agricultural deputies to the just-concluded Congress.

There have been vast changes in the CPSU as well. The norms of Party life are returning to the Leninist principles based on criticism and self-criticism. The Party sees its role as giving ideological, educational and political mobilizing leadership in fulfilling the tasks of perestroika and glasnost. Many of the decisions made and carried out in the past by the Party are now the responsibility of the Soviets, the work teams, the enterprises, etc.

All changes taking place now go in the direction of going back to Lenin's concept of all power to the Soviets.

Finally, many of the discussions and ideological problems and questions that exist today shows the ever greater importance for a meeting of World Communist and Workers Parties, to discuss ideological questions and other questions of mutual interest. □

Brzezinski Serves Another Devil's Brew

JIM WEST

The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century by Zbigniew Brzezinski; Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1989, 278pp., cloth.

For over 30 years, this scion of Polish landed gentry has been so single-minded in his obsession that the name Zbigniew Brzezinski is practically synonymous with anti-Sovietism. Beginning with his initial volume, *The Soviet Bloc—Unity and Conflict*, (1960) he has staked his career on the idea that the forces of conflict would prevail over the elements of unity within the Soviet Union and in the socialist community of nations.

He served as President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor and has been one of the brain-trusters on the Trilateral Commission. His views have been music to the ears of the cold warriors in monopoly-financial circles.

It cannot be said of him that his books and writings are simply philosophical writings—far from it. He himself has been involved in various schemes and projects intended to bring about the fulfillment of his oft-repeated predictions that the USSR will break up and the Eastern European socialist countries will break away from socialism and alliance with the Soviet Union.

Brzezinski's latest volume reads like self-exultation over the supposed triumph of his prophecies. He literally hugs himself for joy over what he considers to be the insoluble problems of socialism. With only a passing nod to the stupendous accomplishments of the Soviet Union, he associates all models of socialism with the mistakes and departures from scientific socialist principles and with the crimes committed during the Stalin years. But he goes further, much further. According to him, the source of this failure is Lenin, Leninism and the vanguard concept of the Communist Party.

For one who has supposedly studied Marxism-Leninism for decades, Brzezinski's ignorance and bias are boundless. One is immediately struck by the venom, distortions and false

characterizations that abound in the pages of his book: Lenin, the "obscure Russian political pamphleteer," and Marx, an "emigre German-Jewish librarian" (p. 3); "The pernicious Leninist tradition" (p. 45); "Leninism: the combination of dogmas and organizational regimentation" (p. 126); "The anti-democratic Leninist legacy" (p. 245); "Communism is fermenting in the Soviet Union, repudiated in Eastern Europe and commercialized in China—it has become a globally discredited ideology" (p. 189); "'Democratic centralism,' Lenin's deliberate misnomer for blind obedience." (p. 162)

To Brzezinski, Leninism is the ultimate evil which begot Stalinism. He sees communism in deep ideological crisis and proclaims the crisis to be terminal. For that reason, he maintains that perestroika and glasnost are bound to fail so long as the leadership does not abandon Leninism.

He writes,

The fatal dilemma of the communist system in the Soviet Union is that its economic success can only be purchased at the cost of political instability, while its political stability can only be sustained at the cost of economic failure." (p. 102)

Here, Brzezinski reveals his utter disrespect for the workers, farmers and scientists of the Soviet Union who, after all is said and done, were the basic force responsible for the industrialization of their country, for its triumph over fascism in the most costly war in history, for the rapid recovery from the devastation of the war, for scientific breakthroughs on earth and in outer space, and who are the decisive force for resolving the contradictions and difficulties facing the revolutionary restructuring of the USSR today.

Nonetheless, this advisor to presidents is ready to give the benefit of his advice: the "USSR can be returned to its global prestige and to the global prestige of Communism" by "redefining the meaning of Leninism so that it begins to resemble social democracy more than bolshevism." (p. 49).

Let us note, in passing, that having invested

years in the attempt to destroy socialism's prestige, Brzezinski suddenly concedes that the USSR and socialism had global prestige, now that he believes they are dead.

He even spells out how capitalism can help "restore" the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with the help of a

Western strategy designed to enhance a post-Communist transition to democracy . . . initially, various degrees of mixed state and private economic sectors, legitimated by social democratic phraseology (sic!) which would thereby create in some cases the eventual point of departure toward a predominantly free enterprise system." (p. 253)

Although he obviously prizes the anti-Sovietism of right-wing social democracy, it isn't so much right or left social democracy that Brzezinski is enamored of as its use as a way-station on the road to restoration of capitalism.

Yet even at that he recognizes that it would not be the same, or relatively as easy, as moving Spain and Portugal from fascism to democracy. Without saying so explicitly, he acknowledges that fascism, as a form of capitalist rule, can be interchanged with bourgeois democracy without disrupting the economic foundation; whereas, to switch from socialism to capitalism, requires a counter-revolution directed at socialism's basic economic principles. He knows how difficult that would be because socialism is so deeply embedded in the life of the people of the USSR and the other socialist countries.

He complains that

even in non-totalitarian Yugoslavia, the monopolistic Communist tradition, rooted specifically in Leninism, has so far stymied the progressive transformation of the country into something approximating a social democracy. (p. 253)

Fully one third of the book is devoted to Poland, which he regards as the weak link in the chain, and to China, which he looks at through the prism of anti-Sovietism. The chief obstacle to restoring capitalism in these and the other socialist countries, according to Brzezinski, is Leninism and the Leninist Party. This he asserts again and again.

He places Leninism and democracy at opposite poles and inimical to one another. To support this figment of his imagination, he selects as examples the few special situations when Lenin justified the use of mass terror and violence against the exploiters and their armed terror gangs. He completely ignores Lenin's consistent championing of demo-

cratic methods as absolutely essential for the development of socialism. In this way he attempts to erase the inherently democratic nature of Leninism.

His method evokes memories of the U.S. prosecutors in the infamous Smith Act trials of Communist leaders in the time of McCarthyite repression. By citing carefully selected quotations from Lenin, entirely out of context and in total disregard of the overall meaning of Lenin's works and life, the government prosecutors then painted pictures of Communists as violent, anti-democratic and terrorist.

Heaping scorn on Lenin as a mere pamphleteer, Brzezinski is unable to see in Lenin the genius of dialectical revolutionary thought and action that he was. This blinds him to the democratic essence of Lenin and Leninism. Instead he postulates that bureaucracy is integral to Leninism, asserting that leadership in "the Leninist manner is from above" only. (p. 45)

One must be ignorant not only of Leninist theory and practice, but of history, to hold such a view.

The Great October Revolution could never have succeeded without the support of the working people of St. Petersburg, Moscow and other industrial centers, as well as the poor peasantry. With arms in hand, they defended their revolution against White Guard armies and the armed forces of invading capitalist powers. Here was democracy expressed in terms of people putting their lives, in addition to ballots, on the line.

Let us take one of the first decrees of the young Soviet republic, the Decree on Land, as an example of the "Leninist manner" or approach. The decree didn't so much give the land to the peasants as it authorized them to take the land from the rich landowning oppressors. In other words, the authorization from above, from the government, required massive self-activity below, among the peasants, to bring the decree to life. Such was and is the Leninist way—from above and below—always aimed at involving and relying on the masses in the solution of their problems. Democracy in action became inevitable. It grew naturally from the style of leadership.

At the heart of Leninism is the struggle for socialism and democracy. "There is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty." (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p.442)

Today, at the heart of perestroika and glasnost, is, as Mikhail Gorbachev expressed it, "more democracy, more socialism" This represents the re-

storation, rejuvenation and further development of Leninism after a prolonged hiatus.

It is not Leninism, but the hiatus, the period in which Leninism was deprived of its essential democratic nature, the period of departure from the essence and manner of Leninism that Brzezinski focuses on. And he does so with the malicious intent of discrediting Leninism. The book is replete with misrepresentations, distortions and lies. We cite a few examples:

To sustain his contention that the world Communist movement faces impending demise, he claims that for the first time the 1988 periodic World Conference on the work of the *World Marxist Review* "did not command major attention from the world's mass media." (pages 190-191)

I attended three conferences on the work of *World Marxist Review*, including the 1988 conference, as a representative of the Communist Party, USA. To my recollection, none of the bourgeois mass media gave any of these conferences "major attention," certainly not in the USA. Apparently the fact that a consensus was achieved on how to improve the work of the journal was never newsworthy for the monopolist media.

In making an issue of a non-occurrence, the lack of major media coverage, Brzezinski covers up the real news of the 1988 conference: it was the largest, best attended conference in the history of WMR, with 93 Communist and Workers' Parties present. When one makes a habit of deviating from rectitude, it is not hard to see failure in success. So it is not surprising that Brzezinski says the conference "augured the approaching end of communism as a significant world phenomena." (p. 191).

It comes as no surprise that he totally misrepresents the speech of the Soviet representative, Anatoly Dobrynin, falsely attributing to him such utterly untrue statements as "the approaching demise of the proletariat as the basis of Communist power," and "the revolutionary process has to be subordinated to the interests of the Soviet Union." (p. 191)

Brzezinski's abysmal ignorance of scientific socialism is surpassed only by his pretensions at being an expert. He interprets Mikhail Gorbachev's attack on wage-levelling (Feb. 1988) as follows:

In effect, Gorbachev was saying that, henceforth, wage differentials based on productivity were to be the true expression of genuine equality, a principle which many American industrialists of pre-trade union days would heartily endorse. (p. 63.)

Putting aside the odious comparison with the heyday of merciless anti-union employers in the U.S. (who, least of all were advocates of "genuine" equality), Brzezinski cannot, or refuses to see, that Gorbachev is restoring the fundamental tenet of socialism: from each according to his ability to each according to his work. In his ignorance, Brzezinski confuses socialism with communism. It is under communism, which has not yet been achieved anywhere, that the true expression of genuine equality finally comes to life because the basic tenet will be from each according to his ability to each according to his need.

Brzezinski wouldn't be Brzezinski without persistent attention to efforts at breaking up the "Soviet empire." He identifies with attempts to undermine socialism in Eastern Europe. He boasts of a list supplied by underground sources in Poland, showing that from 1981 to 1987, 1500 underground newspapers and journals and some 2,400 books were in distribution. He writes of the existence of large numbers of conspiratorial political formations, including ultra-nationalist right wing groups "based on the outlook of pre-war Polish leader, Josef Pilsudski, with central emphasis on national independence and on collaboration against Moscow with such suppressed non-Russian nations as the Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Byelorussians." (pp. 120-121) He even lets you in on the secret that "in Polish Silesia, a tightly disciplined conspiratorial organization, "Fighting Solidarity," consciously works to topple the regime." (p. 122)

As though giving leadership from afar, Brzezinski offers a blueprint for breaking Eastern European countries away from alliance with the Soviet Union:

A strategy of historic stealth would have to be persistently pursued. To be successful it would have to involve the co-optation of at least a part of the ruling class (sic), entail some coordination with proponents of change in adjoining countries and take advantage of splits in Soviet leadership. (p. 113)

Assuming the role of self-appointed spokesman for Eastern Europe, he writes:

The region clearly needs and greatly desires an orderly transition from Soviet-type state socialism to some form of multi-party democratic welfare state. But crossing the line back to capitalism is very difficult [since] the elites cannot guide an evolution in that direction because they know that success would render them socially obsolescent and historically dispensable. (p.143)

It is not without good reason that Brzezinski sees Leninism and the Communist Party as the chief obstacles to the realization of his cherished dreams. He can see an essential difference between Dubcek and Gorbachev. Dubcek, he says, aimed at breaking up the leading role of the Communist Party, whereas Gorbachev calls for a party more responsive to the wishes of the people. (p. 62)

Where the Soviet Union welcomes and encourages the rise of self-organized informal groups as a means of strengthening democracy and social-political involvement of masses, Brzezinski sees them as directed against the Communist Party. Thus, he envisions a role for a reactionary Pamyat in "catering directly to the rising nationalist sentiments of the Great Russian masses." (p. 74)

There can be little doubt that he has spent years fine-tuning his efforts to mastermind the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. His calculations decree that four countries are not now in crisis: China, the GDR, Bulgaria and Korea; six are in crisis: the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Vietnam, Cuba and Angola; and five are in grave crisis: Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Mozambique and Ethiopia. (p. 234)

Operating on the theory of the worse the better, he places Poland and Hungary in the lead in the dismantling process and most likely to reach the "dividing line" (capitalism) before the others. (pp. 248-49) So certain is he that dismantling will take place that he sees only two questions remaining to be answered: how it will happen and will it lead to "Western-style democracies or national dictatorships?" (p. 248)

With the utmost self-assurance, he predicts that by the year 2010 the top four powers will be the USA, Western Europe, China and Japan. Moreover, he says, they will have better relations with each other than they will have with the Soviet Union. He predicts that China's overall economy will surpass that of the USSR by that year. (p. 178)

Characterizing China as "building commercial communism," with its attendant growth of corruption, he notes that in 1987 some 27,000 Chinese students were studying in U.S. universities. (p. 168) His benign treatment of China clearly shows that he is counting on "playing the China card" against the Soviet Union. He anticipates that by surpassing the USSR in the next 20 years, China will confirm the demise of Marxism-Leninism, for by then, he believes, the capitalist element in the economy of China will have become dominant.

He sneers at "Marx's antiquated views of the centrality of the industrial proletariat." (p. 101) He is again wide of the mark. The industrial proletariat has grown worldwide and its ranks have been augmented by new contingents in the processing, service, communications and other industries.

He smugly proclaims, "Human rights is the single most magnetic political idea of the contemporary time. Its evocation by the West has already placed all Communist regimes on the defensive." (p. 256) It is precisely the struggle for human rights in all its manifestations, including first of all the right to life and work, against nuclear omnicide and for an ecologically-safe planet, that puts capitalism on the spot and invests socialism and the Communist parties with high moral authority.

Brzezinski would have done himself a favor to wait for Gorbachev's U.N. speech before rushing into print proclaiming the death of communism. He should have taken note of the increases in labor productivity and gross national product in the first nine months of 1988 in the socialist countries, despite the difficulties encountered in the first stages of perestroika and restructuring. It is the "antiquated" working class, the workers of hand and brain, the Communist Party, and yes, Leninism, which are writing the real story of socialism and its coming grand successes that will put all past successes in the shade.

It is not out of place to compare Brzezinski to the medieval alchemists who spent a lifetime trying to convert base metals into gold. The author of **Grand Failure** has been so busy trying to turn fantasy and wishful thinking into gold that he cannot be bothered with facts.

Completely misreading the meaning of perestroika and glasnost, Brzezinski takes their advent to mean failure and shouts, "Eureka! I have found gold!" As usual, it's fool's gold.

One cannot envy him his great disappointment in his declining days.

Socialism is awakening to a new dawn. Perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union, restructuring, intensive development and expanding democracy in the socialist community of nations, rejuvenation and revitalization of Leninism are harbingers that the best is yet to come. Indeed, it is more democracy, more socialism.

Of course, anyone can make mistakes. Brzezinski has made more than his share. With this book, **The Grand Failure**, he has made another. He should have saved the title for his autobiography.

An Anti-Warrior of Spain and WWII

STEPHEN GLANZROCK

The Anti-Warrior: A Memoir by Milt Felsen, University of Iowa Press, 1989, 245pp., illustrated, \$24.95 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper).

I have always liked American history—even as I keep discovering how much there is to know about it. For instance, back in the seventies, when a friend first told me about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, I remember how surprised I was to learn that there had been Americans who had volunteered to fight in Spain during the years leading up to the Second World War. I had read Hemingway in college, and Cummings' *The Enormous Room*, but nothing that depicted the organized effort of the American left against Fascist tyranny. There wasn't any mention of this in my high school history books, and I'm not sure it's there even now, twenty years later.

The Anti-Warrior is Milt Felsen's autobiographical memoir of the Spanish Civil War and, later, of his capture and life as a prisoner while serving with the OSS—the granddaddy of today's CIA. His book is a welcome opportunity to re-evaluate a part of American and world history that still makes people uncomfortable. Where were the world's democracies while Hitler's bombers flew unopposed over Spain? Why did so many nations sit back and watch with detachment?

And what of the individual? Where does resistance leave off and collaboration begin? The pacifist in Felsen decries war and its horrors, yet the fighter in him is compelled to do whatever he can to defeat Fascism. This is the Anti-Warrior's dilemma: How do you oppose war *and* Fascism simultaneously? Can a just outcome be achieved by any means, at any cost?

Felsen has written a powerful narrative full of fervor and poignancy. In a style at once down-to-earth and profound, *The Anti-Warrior* almost reads as if it were a note left on the kitchen table: *There's food in the icebox, make yourself comfortable, I'll be right back.* In the meantime, this is no family picnic . . .

In 1936, Fascism was on the move in Europe. Mussolini in Italy was invading Ethiopia as Germany and Hitler oiled their Nazi hate machine. Elsewhere, at the western end of the Mediterra-

nean, army officers under Generalissimo Francisco Franco sought to overthrow the newly declared Republic of Spain. But the Spanish people and the Spanish earth fought back. They were joined by volunteers from Scandinavia, France and Belgium, from England and Canada and the USA—52 countries in all. They fought hard, but they fought alone. Before it was over in 1939, one million people had died and Spain fell under Fascist domination.

It would have been so easy to turn this story into an angry heavy handed polemic, but Felsen is never bitter or rancorous. While quick to spot a phony, he is not afraid to turn a critical eye on himself:

Only now when I think of (my mother) do I wonder what her dreams, her fantasies, could have been. In the jazzy twenties of my youth I didn't think of her at all. I thought of myself, exclusively, almost all the time.

Simple words, but oh so deep. (Extend them far enough and you begin to understand how a way of seeing other people can change into something like nationalism or Fascism.)

Felsen's words were still fresh in my mind when a few pages later he says something very different. This is about his studies at the University of Iowa. For a moment, I paused to wonder if I were still listening to the same person:

I took a smorgasbord of courses because fundamentally I was much more interested in what the world would be than in what I would be.

So how does one go from thinking only of himself to caring more about how the world would turn out? Felsen writes:

The decision to make a sacrificial commitment to a cause can come rather easily in a moment of high moral resolve, or when you've been moved by an eloquent appeal, or when you see a child in a burning building, or when you've had a little too much to drink. But sticking with it, as day after day the hardship and danger and tension grow, is quite another matter. Like everyone else I had bad days.

That other self is never far away, but throughout, Felsen remains thoughtful and his objective

is never out of sight:

If I had ever thought of volunteering to go home as I had volunteered to come, I would have been shamed out of it in a hurry. The matter-of-fact courage, dignity, and comradeship of the Spanish population inspired resolve just as much as did the atrociously reactionary objectives of the enemy.

Then, too, in the midst of the most desperate situations, Felsen never misses a chance to find humor. There's a wonderful passage, for example, when the Loyalists are running out of food and psychological-warfare experts are brought in to help break the stalemate. Their job is to convince the Moors to desert the Fascists:

The plan was simple. Between the lines was

... a grove of olive trees. During the night, fresh loaves of bread would be left under them. Loudspeakers were brought up. Then, when the bread was in place, they boomed out:

Moors! Come over to us. We will feed you well and treat you with dignity. Go to the olive trees. There is a message for you.

Nothing. Then we heard movement out where the bread had been placed. Perhaps it was working. But in a little while *their* loudspeaker came on.

Rojos (Reds), we too have a message. Come to the trees.

It could be a trick, but volunteers went out to see. In a few moments they were back. The bread had been thickly buttered.

Rojos, you have little. We have much. Come to us.

With America's entry into the Second World War, and for the second time in five years, Felsen is drawn into battle. By virtue of their up-to-date expertise in guerilla warfare and clandestine operations, Washington's Office of Strategic Services found in the veterans of the Lincoln Brigade a cadre of ready-made "experts." Who better to train and staff this newly organized unit of Special Forces?

Felsen considers it an offer too good to re-

fuse when he considers how he's otherwise probably going to wind up "doing KP in some Mississippi boot camp for the rest of the war."

But frequently, his playful comments mask deeper concerns. For years, the question of the West's attitude to Soviet Russia had troubled Felsen. Was Hitler to be the German "wild card" in the capitalist struggle against the Russian "bear"? Unbearable as the thought of a Hitler victory might be,

This was no clear-cut, idealistic, white-hats-against-the-black-hats crusade like Spain. It was an uneasy coalition of strange bedfellows, many with murky objectives and some with whom I would rather not be caught dead.

To advocate any alternative to war may seem the only sane and sensible thing to do, but sometimes, it is plain, there are other considerations:

Maybe in the long run warfare was obsolete, but for now those (Nazi) bastards had to be beaten.

Felsen's account of his experiences behind enemy lines and his eventual capture and escape from a German prisoner of war camp make compelling reading. But ultimately, what distinguishes *The Anti-Warrior* is the author's refusal to let go of the questions that followed him marching to war. "I wanted to understand my world," he writes. "Just living in it wasn't enough."

If we are truly to understand and be a part of our global community, then Felsen's story and the story of the defenders of Spain should be better known. They are important because the world today is too connected not to see how one man's evil or one nation's evil can bring us all face to face with annihilation. We no longer have the luxury of pretending to see any better than we really do. Fascism is not so easily banished. There is enough to learn from Guernica, Lidice, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and Mylai, enough to last many lifetimes. □

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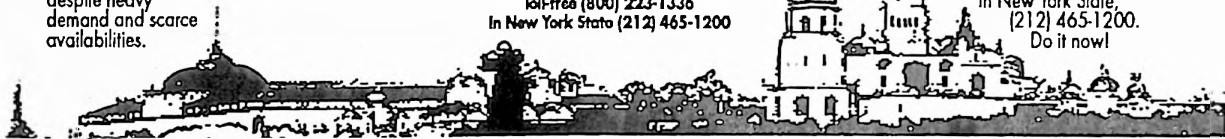
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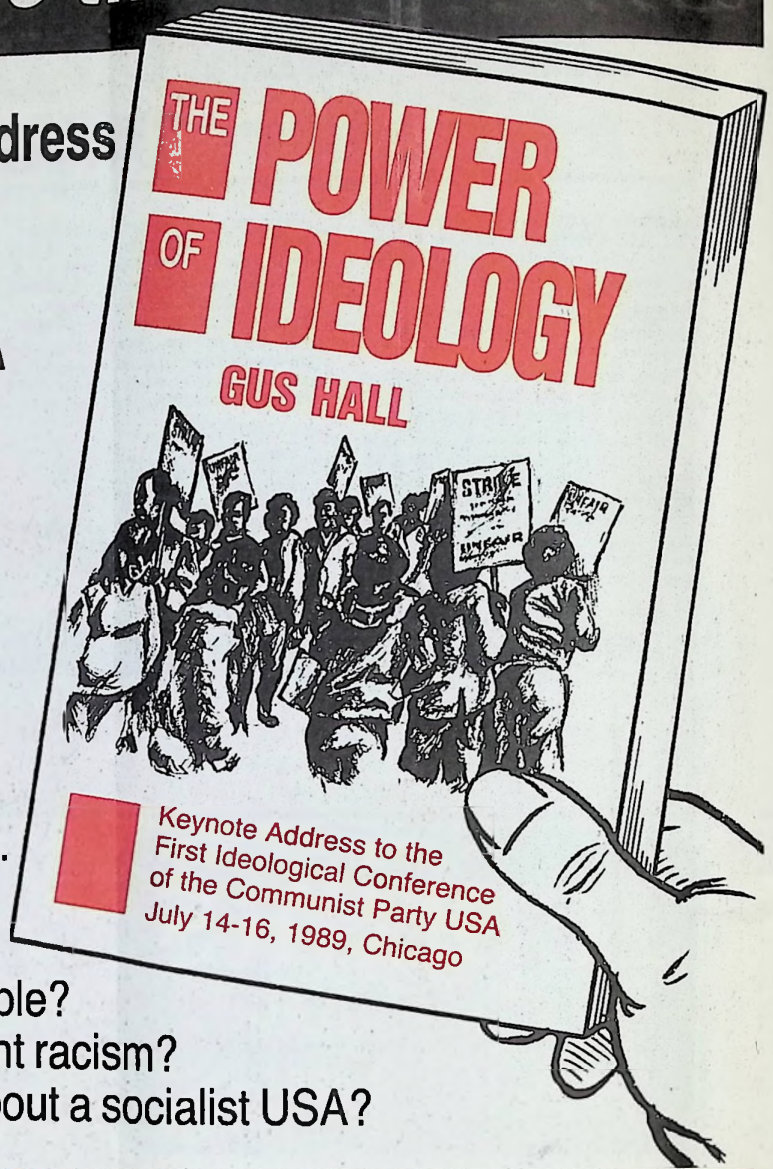
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