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JOURNAL OF MARXIST THOUGHT

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January 1978

$1.00

political affairs
Theoretical Journal of the Communist Party, USA
Vol. LVII, No. 1 January 1978

Political Affairs is published monthly by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc. at 235 West 23 Street, New York, New York 10011, to whom all orders, subscriptions, payments and correspondence should be addressed. Subscription rates: $10 for one year; $5 for six months; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, $11 for one year; single issues, $1. Second class postage paid at the post office in New York, New York.

From the Editors to You . . . .

Dear readers and supporters—we take this occasion to thank the many people who included Political Affairs on their holiday gift list. We deeply appreciate your rapid and generous response to our fund appeal, as well as the gift subscriptions which were given. If you intended to respond to our appeal, but did not during the holiday rush, there is still time to do so now. Next month we will acknowledge individually the contributors to the fund drive.

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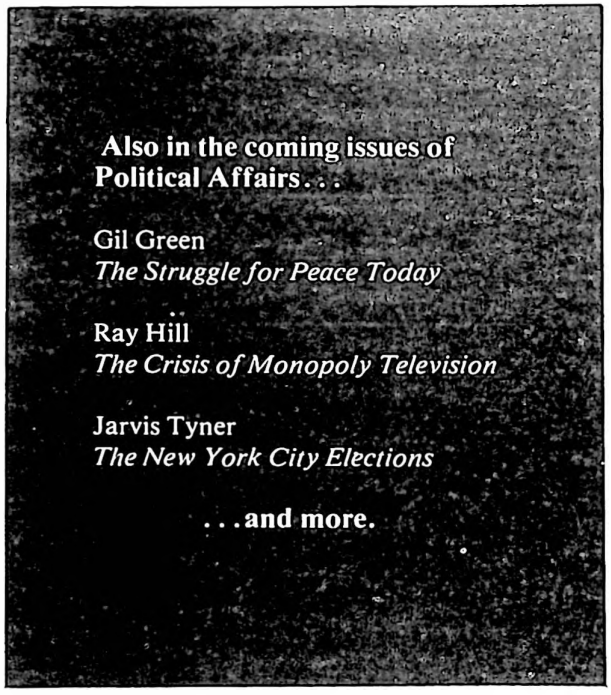
Our February issue this year, as in past years, will feature material on the struggle for Black liberation, including contributions from such prominent writers as Henry Winston, John Pittman and Herbert Aptheker. We call upon PA builders to help us promote the circulation of this special issue by drawing up and sending to us a list of friends, coworkers, activists, classmates, etc. who you would like to have read this issue. Send us their names and addresses (including ZIP code) and we will send them complimentary copies.



Why a Left-Center Coalition?

GUS HALL

In general terms, the task of the Central Committee of our Party is to analyze developments and to formulate our policies and tactics in response to these developments. Our task as writers and speakers is to win our audience to them—to effectively explain, agitate and argue for them. The policies should be reflected in all our writings, including editorials, articles, etc. Not only should they be stated, but they should be the inherent, unstated "flavor" or "seasoning" in all of our writings and speeches.

To use this "seasoning" persuasively one should not only know what the policy is, but also understand why it was established, know the reasoning that led to the conclusions. This can be as important as understanding the policy itself. Therefore, today we will concentrate on the question of why we have projected the policy of struggle for Left-Center unity.

Left-Center unity is a term applied mainly in the trade union movement and the working-class movement in general. There are similar concepts of unity in other areas of mass work, but they usually have other designations. In the struggle for peace, against racism, against regressive taxation, a Left-Center concept may be too restrictive.

The Left-Center concept is a guide for building united front formations and relationships within the working-class and trade union movement. It is a response to the changes that are taking place in the ranks of workers and the trade unions.

Historic Background of "Left-Center" Policy

We say "Left-Center" and not "Center-Left" for a reason: to give the proper emphasis to the role of the Left as the initiating force. In other periods, when the same concept was emphasized, some drew the conclusion that the Left was an unimportant afterthought, or the tail to the Center forces. We want to emphasize, therefore, that we are not giving up the idea of working for Left unity or building Left formations. The Left-Center concept does not replace any other organized forms. It unites them.

Talk to the staff of the *Daily World*. Gus Hall is general secretary of the CPUSA.

The Left-Center concept is not a new idea. This is not the first time our Party has projected this concept. It was a guide for united front movements in other periods, reflecting other realities. It is not new, but it is also not simply a return to the old because in concepts and tactics "you can't go home again" because "home" keeps changing.

The class struggle, the objective processes and the nature of class political currents of today are different. Left-Center alliance is now projected under today's conditions and relationship of forces. It is projected in its own unique historical framework.

I would like to emphasize that we have now placed this concept as the centerpiece in our trade union work. It is now the key to our trade union policies, tactics and overall approach to working-class movements.

We do this because the relationship of forces within the working class and trade union movement has changed. It would have been a wrong emphasis in the recent past, and it would be an error not to project it now. It comes up now because it reflects the new reality and the new relationship of forces in the trade union movement, including that important trade union forces are moving from Right field to Center field. This is the broadest and most significant political motion that is taking place.

One of the most serious setbacks of the McCarthy period was the destruction of the Left in the trade union movement. I considered whether the word "destruction" is too harsh. It is not. This was the most damaging development in the McCarthy period. The destruction of the Left in the trade union movement took place on all levels. And once the Left was destroyed the Right-wing elements became the unchallenged leading influence in the trade union movement and for a long period remained so. The Left was shattered and the Center was demobilized and scattered.

The Party also suffered great losses in that period. Again, the greatest losses in the Party were in the industrial areas. This also helped to create a situation where the Right was in an unchallenged

position.

Because of McCarthyism and also because of some internal weaknesses the Party for some time did not pursue a policy of industrial concentration. Now we can fully appreciate what a weakness that was. We also had almost no shop clubs and for a time there were no shopgate distributions of leaflets or of the press. This was the period when the Left was disorganized and therefore not an effective force in the trade union movement. There were of course some Left forces, but they were not organized.

The Center forces, when they did not have a Left to gravitate towards or be influenced by, were pushed to the Right. The Right influenced the Center, and in many cases the Center forces simply went along for the ride with the Right. Many became silent and passive.

After the McCarthy period the Party, with other militant trade unionists and workers, had to face the problem of how to pick up the pieces as far as the Left in the trade union movement was concerned. As the crisis of capitalism deepened and as policies of class collaboration became more evidently bankrupt, the process of radicalization shifted into higher gear. This gave impetus to a Left current. In the beginning it was a grassroots development, in the form of rank-and-file groups.

It is a long process. The party had to re-establish the policy of industrial concentration, which meant the re-establishment of shop clubs, circulating party press at shopgates, etc. Slowly, step by step, the Party has become an organized influence in the shops and trade unions. The Party's industrial concentration has influenced the re-emergence of the Left. The work of the Party, at each stage, has been based on the changes in the outlook and thinking of the workers. The process of radicalization called for an emphasis on organized rank-and-file groups. That was a very important historic step in the process. It was based on the truth that there was no other way of basically influencing the trade union movement. It was not possible to influence or change it from the top. The rise of rank-and-file movements was a historic development because they made possible establishment of a mass base for the Left trend. Now the rank-and-file movements and groups have become the grassroots base for the Left trend on all levels. That was the basis for the formation of Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy (TUAD).

TUAD was and is a national gathering of these groups and trends. The first convention of TUAD was made up of delegates from Center and Left groups and trends, with very few elected or appointed trade union officials. It became a national coordinating center for these rank-and-file groups, and generally for the Left and Center trends. TUAD has served and continues to serve this historic purpose. It has left its mark on history because it came into being at a time when it was necessary.

With the development of a grassroots movements the Center elements in local and secondary leadership began to feel that there is some hope after all; they began to respond and develop a sense of confidence and to move in a more militant direction because they had a new mass base. So the development of a grassroots "Left" has played a very important role in creating conditions for the emergence of broader and bolder Center forces which we have at the present time.

The Center Forces

The deepening crisis of capitalism has given rise to the growth of a Left and following that the development of an active Center force in the trade union movement. As the crisis deepens so do the policies of class collaboration go into a deeper crisis. It is much more difficult for the Right elements to put over their ideas. As a result, the Right has been losing its influence on the Center forces. The Right forces have become more isolated, and the Center forces have become more active. These forces have started to look for alliances and relationships with the more Left forces. This has been going on for the last number of years. Important sections of the trade union movement have separated themselves from the status quo of class collaboration and will not return to the old position.

A weakness becomes evident as a result of this development. The weakness showed up as reluctance and hesitation to establish relationships with Center forces, both on a leadership and grassroots level, based on fears resulting from old experiences and a lack of confidence in the Left forces. This more than anything else forced us to reformulate our trade union policy more basically and to project the idea of Left-Center unity.

We felt that it was necessary for the Party and the Left forces to say to the Center forces: "You're welcome. We want to work with you." And we have to say it boldly. I think we are still hesitating. The hesitation leads to sectarianism.

The reason for this hesitation is a lack of understanding of the historic moment, a lack of understanding that things have changed, and that we must actively reflect this change and react to it. Everything in life must be seen in transition, including political forces and trends.

Who are the Center forces? They are honest, militant working-class trade union forces. This is true also of those on leadership levels. They are honest trade union forces. They are the largest sector in the trade unions. They are in transition from Right to Center, moving toward the Left. Therefore, they must be worked with. They must be encouraged to move further from one position to another. They most likely will not agree with the Left on all immediate questions, and certainly not on a specific program.

They will agree in specific areas with the Party and with the Left, and work together with the Left. That is what the idea of Left-Center is all about; it is a united front between forces who agree on some questions, but disagree on others.

The Center forces are in the process of becoming radicalized. So the Left-Center concept is a united front policy with forces who are in transition from Right to Left. I want to emphasize this because there are historic moments when the transition is not in that direction.

This was not the case during the McCarthy period. That is a very important distinction. That is why our policy of Left-Center unity is realistic today, while it would not necessarily have been realistic in other periods. We could not project this kind of a program if the tendency were in the opposite direction, from Left to Right, from militant actions to passivity, to class collaboration.

The Case of Steel

I want to explore the concept of Left-Center unity in relation to the steel industry.

Clearly, in the steel union there are different kinds of forces. There are the Right forces—McBride, Abel, the top leadership; there are the Center forces; there is a growing organized Left force and a Communist Party.

The contest in the election campaign for the steel union leadership was between the Right forces and a Left-Center coalition. In this case it was a loose Center-Left coalition of forces. There were three organizations involved: the McBride, right-wing organization; the Sadlowski Fightback organization, and the Steelworkers Rank-and-File Committee, which is a gathering of numerous Left and Center rank-and-file movements and groups. There are some other Left groups that are not national in scope. This Left-Center, rank-and-file movement plays a very important role in some specific struggles, for example, in the iron miners' and taconite strike in Minnesota. This is a most important strike. It is a direct challenge to the anti-labor policies of Big Steel and the no-strike, class-collaborationist policy of the Right-wing leadership of the steel union. The Right-wing leadership of the union does not attack the strike, but neither does it give it much support.

George Edwards, a steelworker from Ohio who is the co-chairman of the Steelworkers Rank-and-File Committee, went to the Mesaba Range and spoke at a number of meetings. This forced the McBride leadership to take a more active role in support of the strike. That is a good example of the role of the Left-Center forces. It gave great encouragement to the Center forces among the taconite workers in Minnesota.

It is important to know that the Center-Left challenge to the Right-wing leadership of Abel actually won the majority of votes among basic steelworkers. They most likely won a majority of the whole union, but were "counted out."

After the elections some differences developed. Some thought all forces and efforts should be directed towards building the Center forces. Others took the position that there is a need for both the Center and the Steelworkers Rank and File movement as a Left-Center force, and that this is not a contradiction to working with and in other movements whenever that is possible and necessary.

To get clarity it is necessary to make a more concrete assessment of which forces are Center and which are Left. And it is necessary to make the assessment by analyzing the positions of the different movements on specific issues—the economic struggles, on the struggle against racism, independent political action and many others.

Examining the forces involved and their positions, it is clear the Center forces have an intermediate position on economic struggles, not con-

sistently militant; a Center position on the struggle against racism, sometimes seeking to opportunistically get around the issue; and on political action they are moving in a Left direction, but have not yet reached the level of the Left and broken with the two old parties. They are honest, positive, militant forces, often influenced by Left concepts and ideas. But they have some limitations.

Left-Center unity is designed to influence the Center forces on specific questions, but in most cases that does not mean they are moved to a Left position in general. Very often there are no solid walls between the Left and the Center. There is always a mixture of Center and Left ideas that overlap. Once the correct assessment is made it becomes clear there is no contradiction between building the Steelworkers Rank and File, and working with the Center forces and Fightback.

For example, the Left had a fundamental influence on the Center forces on the question of struggle against racism. This could not have been done without two things—shop clubs of Communists and a Left-Center movement like the Steelworkers Rank and File.

The correct assessment is important because if one thinks the Center forces are a Left force, one will expect to work with them on that level. And one can be disillusioned very quickly when they do not respond as the Left does on many burning questions of the moment. They will go so far at a specific moment and no further.

Let's take another issue—affirmative action. The Right wing, including the Right social democrats, take the Bakke position, in full support of racism. That remains a serious problem. The Center forces, while taking positions against racism in general, sometimes say affirmative action is no solution, but that the solution is "full employment." Under pressure from the Left they vote for resolutions for affirmative action, but do not agree on measures to force its implementation. And while this position is not the same as the Right's, it is both demagogic and opportunistic. It is even self-contradictory, because the working class can not fight for full employment if it is divided, and affirmative action is a means of uniting the working class.

We have reached a point—not just in steel, but generally—where concrete plans to eliminate inequality have become a must. The plans must include adjustments in hiring, upgrading and all the other questions that arise. The plans must concretely propose adjustments in the seniority system to do away with inequality. Such adjustments will not destroy the seniority system; on the contrary, refusal to make adjustments will destroy the seniority system. The seniority system must serve the purpose of uniting the class. Put in the context of an overall plan white workers will understand it better, and can be convinced that the adjustments in seniority, upgrading, hiring, etc., are necessary.

So in this issue it is clear why a Left voice is essential. But it is true of all situations. Life has proven that the Left can influence the Center, as demonstrated especially in steel.

We must guard against any error of seeing the Left as only the Communist Party, or the Communist Party as the Left. The Communist Party is very much a part of the broader Left, but there is a Left that is not Communist.

The Left-Center concept cannot be limited to common actions. It is a much more basic concept. It can not and should not end with action. It is the basis of continuing actions. And it is the basis for continually bringing Center forces toward the Left position.

The Left-Center approach in the present context means a broadening of the united front.

While developments differ in other unions, they all move in the same direction. There are parallel developments in the machinists, auto, longshore, electrical and in some of the construction unions. The hold of the Right-wing forces is loosening, and the Center forces are gravitating more toward the Left positions. The Left-Center concept is a viable united front policy of struggle.

The Left-Center forces are the power base of the working-class movement. That should influence how we write about these forces and their role in struggles. The Center forces are more viable when they relate to and are allied with the Left. They are politically and ideologically different, and that should influence how we write about them.

A word on Left-Center program. At this moment there is no specific overall program. The program must vary to reflect specific situations.

A Left-Center program in the auto union, for instance, is different than in the steel union. Why? Because there is an economic crisis in the steel industry, a crisis of overproduction.

In Youngstown, Ohio, Youngstown Sheet and

Tube is closing the big plant. The Right-wing of the union leadership is sending a delegation to Tokyo to convince Japanese corporations to buy and operate the plant in Youngstown as their solution.

The Left-Center forces in steel are ready for a much higher level of program; they are ready to discuss taking over the plants. There are broad forces in Youngstown, Buffalo and Bethlehem who, because of the crisis and the critical nature of the problems it poses for the steel cities as a whole are discussing takeover by the city, state or federal governments.

An interesting historical fact is that Campbell, Ohio, was always a Youngstown Sheet and Tube town. When Comrade William Z. Foster headed the Steelworkers Organizing Committee in 1919, he was very successful in the Campbell area, and company thugs burned down Campbell in retaliation and blamed it on Foster's organizers. Now the closing of the plant will wipe Campbell off the map.

So the Left-Center program for Campbell and Youngstown can be on a much higher level. The workers and even the union leadership are ready for more radical solutions.

The program for each industry must reflect its specific problems. This does not mean that an overall Left-Center program will not emerge. For instance, it is possible that a Left-Center program for political independence in the steel towns will emerge at an earlier date.

To conclude, the struggle to build Left-Center unity is to concretize, to give expression to the new level of political and ideological currents in the ranks of the working class and the trade union movement. It is a guide to buiding a broad-based unity of struggle.

The Crisis of the Cities

Edward Boorstein

The crisis of the cities is an acute manifestation of the general crisis of American capitalism. Our cities have become concentration points for many of our society's most virulent ills—unemployment, racism, slum housing, inadequate health care, poor education, a deteriorating quality of life.

Every day sees stories in the newspapers of one or another of these ills. We read of a federal report which shows that "74 per cent of New York City whites between the ages of 16 and 19 and 86 per cent of blacks and other minorities did not have a full-time job." Then we see the headline, "As Election Nears, New Orleans Starts Talking About Its Troubles"—the manufacturing base is smaller than it was 15 years ago, the inner city school system has been almost totally abandoned by whites. Later we learn that Boston's Symphony Road Area is a "Medley of Fires, Drugs, Decay, and Fear."

Two years ago we saw New York City's financial mechanism break down—and a "solution" imposed which slashed municipal employment and services. Detroit has also laid off tens of thousands—sanitation workers, Firefighters, policemen. Recently, the school system of Toledo, Ohio, closed its classrooms for lack of money.

The roots of the urban crisis lie deep in capitalism. Cities reflect the society of which they are a part. Under capitalism, they reflect class division and racism—they have rich neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods, ghettos. They also reflect the anarchy of capitalism. For a city to work well, many things have to mesh—its economy, population, housing, transportation system, schools and hospitals, finances. And the city must fit properly into the country's economy as a whole. But anarchic capitalism cannot produce the necessary meshing.

From the earliest days of industrial capitalism, its cities have suffered from ills. But for a long time, capitalism's youthful vigor and growth kept these ills in check. Now, however, the sickness of the cities has moved into the crisis phase.

Marx and Engels on Cities

Engels wrote in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845): "Every great city has one or more slums where the working class is crowded together. True, poverty often dwells in hidden alleys close to the palaces of the rich; but, in general, a separate territory has been assigned to it where, removed from the happier classes, it may struggle as long as it can." (Progress Publishers, p. 66.)

Engels described a slum: "Scarcely a whole window-pane can be found.... Heaps of garbage and ashes lie in all directions....Here live the poorest of the poor...the majority Irish or of Irish extraction." (p. 67.)

In analyzing the position of the Irish, Engels made a point basic to the understanding of cities under capitalism—the need of the capitalists for a reserve army of labor. "The rapid expansion of English industry could not have taken place if England had not possessed in the numerous and impoverished population of Ireland a reserve at command....There are in London 120,000; in Manchester 40,000; in Liverpool 34,000 poor Irish people." (p. 129.)

Then, as now, unemployment plagued the working class. During the economic crisis of 1842, "the starving workmen, whose mills were idle, besieged the sidewalks in armies....A million and a half people in England and Wales had to apply for relief under the Poor Laws." In one city, "the number of poor to be supported rose...to...more than twenty per cent of the whole number of inhabitants." (pp. 126, 127.) In many cities the financial reserves of the Poor Law guardians was exhausted before the crisis reached its height. Naturally there arose what newspapers today would call "the problem of crime."

Marx in *Capital* carried the analysis further: Capitalism was producing great cities. "Except London, there was at the beginning of the 19th century no single town in England of 100,000 inhabitants. Only five had more than 50,000. Now there are 28 towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants." (Kerr edition, p. 725.) Capitalism, by bringing about an agricultural revolution and the use of machinery was driving people off the land. And the accumulation of capital in industrial towns was attracting the "exploitable human material" into them. (p. 726.)

Edward Boorstein was formerly economic consultant to the Chilean government of Salvador Allende and is the author of *Allende's Chile: An Inside View.*

Landlords were as greedy then as they are now. They gouged tenants, they speculated in land and property. "Gentlemen in this business," says a report quoted by Marx, "may fairly be expected to do as they do—get all they can from the tenants while they have them, and leave as little as they can for their successors." (p. 724.)

As is clear from Marx and Engels, capitalist cities have always had class divisions, slums, and other ills.

U.S. Cities of an Earlier Day

The flow of immigrants from agriculture and from abroad into cities was repeated on a vaster scale in the United States. Between 1860 and 1914, 28 million immigrants poured in waves of Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians, and later, Italians, Jews, and Slavs.

Except for a small proportion who settled on the land, the immigrants, mostly from rural and semi-rural backgrounds, were packed into ghetto slums and relegated to the lowest-paying, most unattractive jobs. Around them they found prejudice.

The prejudice was not simply the result of European nationalisms carried over into the New World. It was encouraged by the capitalists who controlled the government, the educational system, the newspapers. The prejudice of native-born against immigrant, of Protestant against Catholic and Jew, of people from Northwestern Europe against those from Southern and Eastern Europe, divided the working class, helped keep people slaving for miserable wages and living in crowded, dark, airless tenements.

Those fortunate to live in "better neighborhoods" were not encouraged to understand the problems of the Irish in Hells Kitchen, the Italians in Mulberry St., the Jews in Delancey St.—the slums of New York. They were instead led to think of the people in these areas as "different" and inferior. The city suffered from crime and corruption. Good people mustn't think that these problems were caused by the terrible conditions—so they became the fault of the Irish and Italian Catholics and the Jews.

Yet for all the miserable conditions, there were also some favorable circumstances. American cities were growing, their industry and commerce expanding, their populations increasing. In good times they were able to provide jobs for the immigrants. Also, the U.S. economy was not nearly as much in the grip of monopoly as later. There was far greater room to open small businesses and some immigrants did. The children of the immigrants were usually able to improve their economic situation over that of their parents.

As always, there were the inevitable recessions and unemployment, and there was the terrible Depression of the 1930s. But the cities were not in a state of long-run stagnation which persisted even when times got better. They were moving with—not behind—the economy as a whole. They had problems, but they were not yet in a state of chronic crisis.

World War II and After

Large-scale immigration into U.S. cities continued during and after World War I, only now it consisted mainly not of Europeans, but of Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics.

In 1910 over 90 per cent of the Black population lived in the South and was rural. A wave of Black migration to the cities of the North got underway during World War I, and continued through the Great Depression. World War II brought another great speedup in Black migration. The postwar expansion of U.S. industry and the Korean War kept this migration going at first. Then another factor came into play—the mechanization of Southern agriculture. Machines replaced Black field hands on the plantations and farms of the South. The Black people were driven to migrate by the elimination of their jobs.

All together, millions of Blacks migrated—1.6 million from 1910 to 1940, 4.5 million from 1940 to 1970. By 1970, almost half of the Black population of the United States lived outside the South, mostly in the Northeast and Midwest, mostly in cities.

Inability to earn a living on the land also forced millions of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans into U.S. cities. 1.1 million Mexicans entered between 1950 and 1975, according to official statistics; an additional number came in without documentation. Over 600,000 Puerto Ricans came in during this same period. The Mexicans settled mainly in the Southwest and California, although recently many have gone to Northern industrial cities, especially Chicago. The Puerto Ricans concentrated heavily in New York, but also settled in other cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago.

The racism which met the new urban immigrants, especially the Blacks, was far more ferocious than what the older ones had had to contend with. Slavery and a long history of U.S. oppression of Latin American peoples had left a terrible economic, political and ideological heritage. Color, or at least a distinctive appearance, made the objects of prejudice more recognizable, and this helped make its application more systematic.

The new immigrants were assigned to the lowest-paying, most dangerous, heaviest, dirtiest, most menial jobs. And they found their way to the better jobs blocked. They were locked into ghettos far more segregated than those of the previous immigrants. There they were robbed by the landlords, the storekeepers, and almost everyone else they had to do business with. The landlords carried their greed and viciousness to new extremes. They exploited racism; they helped foment and spread it. They divided the housing market—one part for whites, others for Blacks and other minorities. Blocking the access of the minorities to the "white" market keeps the supply of housing to them low in relation to the demand—which of course helps the landlords gouge. Housing in the ghettos commands higher rents than comparable housing outside them.

Yet, the fundamental explanation for both the urban crisis and racism lies in the working of American capitalism and the needs of the U.S. ruling class. The working of capitalism has been changing the cities. Although the postwar immigration is in itself similar to past immigrations, the circumstances facing the immigrants are vastly different. Automation, a flight of industry and commerce, and a massive migration of people to the suburbs have been producing the changes. They would be producing changes regardless of the race and color of the immigrants. Moreover, although the problems created by the changes fall by far most heavily on the minority groups who stand lowest on the class ladder, they fall on white workers as well.

The Causes of General Decay

Automation has been shrinking the number of unskilled jobs—the ones immigrants have traditionally moved into. At the same time, industry has been engaged in a great shift away from the cities, especially the older centers of the Northeast and Midwest. Industry has been shifting to the suburbs, the Sunbelt, and foreign countries. Land is cheaper in the suburbs, and automation makes it desireable to carry out factory operations in single-story plants which require more land than the old multistory ones of the cities; also, the development of truck transportation makes it more important to be on a good highway than near a railroad station. The Sunbelt offers a non-union labor force and low wage rates as well as plenty of cheap land. Many foreign countries offer a labor force kept in line by repression, and wages rates so low as not to bear comparison.

And there has been a massive movement of people from city to suburb—made possible by the automobile, which released people from having to live close to public transportation. But the automobile alone does not explain the size of the movement. This movement was deliberately promoted by the government through a variety of means—heavily subsidized highway construction and subsidy to private home ownership through government-supported mortgage credit and by allowing people to deduct interest payments on mortgages from their income for tax purposes. Promoting the growth of suburbs was a ruling class economic and political strategy—it furthered the interests of the automobile, oil and construction industries; the real estate business, and the banks; and it was seen as an additional means for dividing people, especially working people, and for getting a large part of them to identify with the private property system through home ownership.

In sum: Past waves of immigrants found cities whose populations and economies were growing. The recent immigrants have found cities, many of which have been declining. Among the twenty-four largest cities, fourteen declined in population between 1960 and 1973, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, St. Louis. Employment has also been declining. The declining cities are concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest, but some cities in other areas are also suffering.

What can the workers do? An unemployed Black worker in New York can't follow a clothing factory to Taiwan. He can't easily move to the suburbs. The construction of low income apartment housing in the suburbs is generally restricted by racist zoning regulations. Racism locks the minority groups into unemployment in stagnant cities.

So the cities have become pools of unemployment. Almost without exception, unemployment is greater in the central cities than in the surrounding

areas. Black unemployment runs double that for whites, but in the central cities white unemployment is also very high. Unemployment is huge among teen-agers everywhere, but reaches astronomic levels in the central cities, averaging 20 per cent for whites, 40 per cent for Blacks.

True unemployment is worse than even these figures show. They do not include those who have never worked or have given up looking for a job because they have lost hope of finding one. A recent special Bureau of Labor Statistics report gives an idea of what the true picture is. In most major cities, 65 to 80 per cent of the youth are jobless. The regional commissioner of labor statistics called the situation in New York—he could have said the same about many cities—"a youth employment disaster."

As always, one thing leads to another; stagnation and unemployment coupled with racism create a setting favorable to a process of general decay—crime, housing abandonment, arson, fiscal crisis.

Unemployment—especially widespread unemployment of the young who have never had a job and have no clear prospect of obtaining one—leads to the growth of the problems of prostitution, drugs, mugging and the like.

Abandonment is now a widespread disease, scarring many cities. In New York alone, there are over 150,000 abandoned units. What causes the spread of abandonment? The poverty which afflicts a large proportion of city people limits the amount of money that even the rapacious landlords can gouge out of them. So the landlords turn to making their money by cutting down services and maintenance. The ability of tenants to resist is weakened by racism which restricts their freedom to move. The banks enter the process by "redlining" whole areas against mortgage lending, making it impossible to sell the buildings. The possibility of sale is a main reason for holding a building—a high proportion of landlord gains come from sale and resale. With this possibility eliminated, the landlord switches to an alternative way of making a killing—ceasing to turn in property taxes and perhaps also mortgage payments; this multiplies profits manyfold. Then when the city or bank gets after him, he abandons.

Most arson today is part of the same phenomenon as abandonment. The New York Times (10/25/77) interviewed Robert May of the International Association of Arson Investigators after an arson ring was arrested in Boston. Mr. May "feels that the Boston situation 'could be duplicated in virtually every city in the country.' " He "gave what he said was a common scenario for arson for profit, starting with the acquisition at 'distress prices' of property in inner city neighborhoods. The landlords, he said, 'do little in the way of maintenance and frequently blame the tenants.' The property changes hands on paper frequently, Mr. May said, adding that 'each time there's an increase in insurance, allegedly because the landlord is going to improve it.' The property continues to deteriorate, he said, and then come the first fires which cause the tenants to vacate the property.... Finally, the authorities order the building condemned as uninhabitable, and the landlord collects his insurance."

The fiscal crisis of the cities stems partly from their general decline, partly from the many responsibilities unloaded on them, and partly from the skimming of the cream of the country's tax potential by a Federal Government which pours billions and billions of dollars into military expenditures.

To begin with, American cities have always been the object of wholesale looting by businessmen and politicians. The banks have a juicy business in municipal bonds. They buy such bonds at an already good interest rate—the bonds are tax free, so that with a corporate income tax of 48 per cent the true yield is double. They underwrite bonds to be sold to others—for example, they buy a bond issue for $295 million and then in one day sell it for $300 million, realizing a quick, cool $5 million profit. They also collect a chain of fees for "authenticating" and delivering bonds, for acting as "trustees," for serving as "paying agents" for interest payments. The banks have well-worked-out tricks for assuring a supply of fully safe bonds for themselves. For example, they use their power to have separate "authorities" set up for bridges, road tunnels, etc. which yield a high income from tolls, and then buy the bonds of these authorities. This arrangement assures that the fat toll revenues will not be used to cover urgent city needs such as mass transit, and will therefore be available for interest payments to the banks. Finally, the banks who when they are lending always make sure to charge the highest interest rates possible themselves receive large amounts of the cities' funds as interest-free deposits.

There are many other looters. Giant real estate

operators make campaign contributions to city politicians and the tax assessments on their properties are reduced. Those who sell to cities pad their costs, construction companies blow up their expenses—the initial estimate for the renovation of New York's Yankee Stadium was $24 million, the final cost over $100 million. Billions of dollars in legal fees, insurance premiums, public relations retainers, etc. go to companies with which city officials are connected. Tens of thousands of political hacks are given cushy city jobs. With the growth of social services, new companies and people—nursing homes, Medicaid mills, day care centers—are given access to the trough.

On top of this, the flight of industry and the movement of higher income people to the suburbs reduces the cities' tax base. At the same time, the problems stemming from poverty, unemployment, and decay—dumped heavily on them—causes their needs for funds to balloon. City expenditures on welfare, education, and health and hospitals soared from $2 billion in 1955 to $13 billion in 1974.

The condition of the U.S. economy as a whole has also been hurting the cities. Inflation has been biting into one of the main sources of revenues—property taxes; it is impossible to keep property assessments for tax purposes rising as fast as inflation. The latest recession has done great damage, especially to cities which, like New York, depend on a sales tax.

But still, the cities would be able to help themselves more and get more help from their states, if it were not for the tremendous proportion of taxes pre-empted by the Federal Government. And the Federal Government would be able to undertake a large-scale effort to help the cities if it were not for the voracious military budget.

New York City

The New York City crisis is more than just the fiscal crisis to which the banks and government have been paying the most attention. Manufacturing industries have been leaving. In 1948, 350,000 workers were employed in the city's largest manufacturing industry, apparel; since then, this industry has lost 200,000 jobs. Employment by the second largest manufacturing employer—printing and publishing—is down 40,000 from its peak.

Until 1969, a growth in private nonmanufacturing employment helped counteract the effects of the decline in manufacturing. But since then this employment has also been declining. Company headquarters have been leaving the city—in 1956, 140 of *Fortune's* 500 largest industrial corporations were headquartered in New York; by 1976, the number had shrunk to 84. Automation has also helped cut down jobs—computerization has reduced the demand for clerical personnel in brokerage houses and banks. Containerization has cut thousands of port jobs.

The last of the rising employment sectors—government—continued to grow through 1974—and then came the fiscal crisis and the layoff of 60,000 municipal employees. Between 1970 and 1976, there was a drop of 550,000 in the total number of jobs in New York City. The population has also been declining—over this same period, there was a net outmigration of 500,000 people.

A report of the Congressional Budget Office states that "New York City's current budget problems have been precipitated by its inability to borrow money in the municipal bond market." *(New York City's Fiscal Problem,* October 10, 1975). This seemingly factual language is a fancy lie about what actually happened. The crisis was not precipitated by the ordinary workings of this anonymous entity, the "municipal bond market." It was precipitated as a matter of deliberate policy by New York's bankers. These bankers started dumping billions of dollars in city securities months before the crisis broke out. David Rockefeller has testified at state legislative hearings that in the seven months before the crisis Chase Manhattan Bank reduced its holdings of New York City notes and bonds by "only" $93 million. William F. Haddad, Director of the Assembly Office of Legislative Oversight, charged at the hearings that "the city's major banks quietly and quickly divested themselves" of $2 to $2.5 billion in city securities from the fall of 1974 through the spring of 1975. If the banks had not unloaded this gigantic sum, there would have been no "inability to borrow money in the municipal bond market."

The banks were disturbed by what had been happening in New York—by the growth in city employment, by the level of wages and pensions won by the municipal unions, by the establishment of open admissions at City University. These things threatened bank interests. They could cause the city to try to raise taxes on the banks themselves and on the insurance, real estate, and other businesses with which they are connected. They could also jeopar-

dize the billions of dollars in city securities held by the banks. So the banks wanted to put a stop to them, to put New York through a financial wringer, much as the International Monetary Fund does periodically with underdeveloped countries.

Even after the "crisis" broke out and the private individuals holding or considering the purchase of city securities had gotten scared, the banks could have solved the problem of "the danger of default." They could have worked out with the city a long term plan for stretching out the repayment of the city debt they held. The banks, when they have to, often renegotiate the debts of foreign countries in financial difficulties, postponing or stretching out payments. But how, without raising the specter of "default," could they force the city to fire municipal employees, freeze wages, and take the other measures that they were lusting after? The federal government played at the same game.

New York's municipal unions have a history of class collaboration. Their leaders pride themselves on their "realism" and their ability to work out backroom arrangements with their friends and partners, the officials of the city. This history left both unions and leaders unprepared for the offensive of the banks and federal government, made it easy for the bankers and Ford and Simon to outwit, outmaneuver, and outbluff them.

The unions' strength lay in acting as one—and in mobilizing the people of the city behind them. But the unions were disunited. Their leaders didn't work out a common strategy and public relations policy. They didn't negotiate as one.

The unions should have worked to unmask the phony line of the banks and the federal government that "there simply is no money." There is money. The federal government, the banks, the real estate interests have it. And a person is not an economic illiterate who has to be educated by bankers if he thinks this money should be used to help the city.

The unions never worked out and publicized a program of their own for handling the crisis—one which could have contained a debt moratorium by the banks, the collections of the enormous backlog of unpaid real estate taxes, the raising of real estate assessments on large properties, the assumption of welfare costs by the federal government and large-scale federal aid and loans. Instead the leaders of the unions let people be bamboozled by the economic claptrap the banks and the federal government were handling out.

The unions not only caved in one by one, but they also committed an unpardonable sin—they invested close to $4 billion of their members' pension funds to be used as a source of emergency financing. This not only jeopardizes the pensions the workers sweated a lifetime for, but by giving the bankers and the government a hold on the unions, weakens their position in future negotiations.

The results are many and sad. Through the Municipal Assistance Corporation and the Emergency Financial Control Board, New York's elected government was, in effect, supplanted by a corporate junta—people like Felix Rohatyn, a director of ITT and a partner in the investment banking company Lazard Freres. A three-year financial plan was put into effect which is a bankers' dream. It imposed a reduction in municipal employment which through layoffs and attrition has reached 67,000 and is continuing. It imposed a wage freeze for city workers; an increase in the transit fare from 35 to 50 cents; the end of free tuition at the City University. It has brought less fire and police protection, cuts in education, more garbage in the streets, and closed health and day care centers. It means further decay.

Some people are still not satisfied. William Proxmire, Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, through which an extension of the law authorizing federal loans to the city will have to pass, wants three more things—a "modification" in rent controls, a reduction in pension benefits, and further cuts in the city's payroll. This is certainly something on which the unions can fight—even the *New York Times* objects to Proxmire's demands.

The Carter Urban Policy

The crisis of the cities is not the only problem afflicting American capitalism. It is being hit by problems from all sides—inflation, balance of payments deficits, energy, the need for heavy investment in mass transit systems, etc. Still the ruling class insists on keeping up the military budget. The combination of many problems plus a bloated military budget cripples the government's ability to deal with the crisis of the cities.

During his campaign, Carter pledged a "comprehensive" urban policy. But his lack of action on the parallel problem of unemployment, his unwillingness to endorse any Humphrey-Hawkins "full em-

ployment" bill other than an emasculated one, provide a clue on what to expect from his urban policy.

"Informed White House sources," reports the *New York Times* (12/5/77), "now say that no more than $2 billion or $3 billion will be available for new urban initiatives in next year's budget, possibly much less. The President's urban policy group had hoped to obtain $8 to $10 billion, and even that was thought inadequate by many urban and black leaders."

Government officials have been talking about creating an urban development bank to lend or to guarantee loans to businesses to encourage them to expand or locate in distressed cities. Public investment to put up government-owned industries and enterprises in cities is of course out—it would mean trespassing on the sacred preserves of private enterprise. But how successful can a development bank be in reversing the deep tide that has been pulling private business out of the older cities? The bank may result in a few showcase establishments, but the overall result will be minute.

The government also has a hodge-podge of other programs. One is the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), through which local governments are to provide public service jobs with federal money. Urban minority unemployed, especially youth, are supposed to be a "special target group" to be provided with jobs. Here is what *U.S. News & World Report* (12/5/77) says about how CETA actually works: "Evidence of substantial misuse of CETA funds has surfaced in city after city. Instead of providing jobs for the hard-core unemployed as Congress intended, some local administrators have been found to be favoring less-needy people, including relatives of officials, and using program money to help meet regular city payrolls."

A truly comprehensive attack on the problem of the cities would include powerful action against all aspects of the racism which holds the minorities captive in pockets of unemployment. The Carter Administration has been moving backwards on this.

Fiddling with phony little programs is not going to prevent our cities from further decay. The problems are by now so big that only massive action can make a dent on them. The precondition for such action is a massive cut in the military budget. Another precondition is to force a breaking of the mold to which state monopoly capitalism restricts government action. The problems of the cities are not going to be solved by babbling about private enterprise. In relation to the size of the problem the Carter urban policy is a farce.

Policies and Programs

To suggest that the problems of our cities can be fully solved under capitalism would be to hold out an illusion. These problems can no more be eliminated under capitalism than can the problems of the business cycle and unemployment. Only with the replacement of capitalist anarchy by planning, only under socialism can the problems of the cities be solved.

But this of course does not at all mean that nothing can be done under capitalism. Between nothing and a fundamental solution lies a long stretch. Many things can be done along this stretch of vital importance to the millions of people suffering from the urban crisis even if they fall short of a fundamental solution. And through the struggle for these things a people's coalition can gain strength.

The master key for building strength is of course building unity—above all Black-white unity. We are facing a wily, experienced enemy who misses no chance to sow disunity—between Black and white, different ethnic groups, city and suburb. We must be constantly on guard not to fall into the traps the enemy sets to divide us. For example, some writers are discovering that the boundaries between cities and suburbs are archaic and work to the financial disadvantage of the cities. The boundaries are archaic and sometimes urgently require adjustment. But boundaries are not the basic cause of the cities' crisis, nor is their revision a basic solution. And we must avoid being drawn into struggles which pit suburbanites against city dwellers.

Our strategy for the crisis of the cities must be part of the strategy of building an anti-monopoly coalition. We must focus on the main enemy and on the big money—the monopolies and the military budget. We must avoid the situation into which the enemy always tries to maneuver the people—in which the military budget is sacred and everyone is squabbling over what little is left over.

Our program must not of course be unrealistic politically. But it must also not lag behind the people's own thinking. Some elements of a program

to attack urban decay are:

* A $30 billion cut in the military budget plus and increase in taxes on the monopolies and the super-rich. Passage of the Transfer Amendment sponsored by Congressman Parren Mitchell and others would be an important step toward realizing this.

* The direct creation of four million public-service jobs in the cities plus a massive program for training unemployed people for these jobs.

* A complete takeover by the federal government of unemployment insurance, the raising of benefits and their equalization throughout the country, and the extension of insurance to cover the whole period of unemployment.

* A federal program for the annual construction of one million low-cost public housing units, plus schools, hospitals and day care centers, with the factories required for such a program being located, wherever possible, in distressed cities.

* A program for the federally-supported construction of mass transit systems for those cities and metropolitan areas that require them.

* A federal law flatly prohibiting industries from running away to foreign countries and requiring industries that propose to run away within the United States (1) to give several years notice; (2) to provide several years severance pay, job retraining, and assistance in finding a new job to their workers; and (3) to pay a heavy tax to the city they are running away from.

* A federal law prohibiting cities and states from offering tax concessions and other subsidies to attract industry.

* A federal law prohibiting "redlining."

* The takeover by the federal government of all welfare costs and the equalization of payments throughout the country.

* The elimination of cities' dependence on private financing by the provision of federal credit and financial aid.

* The takeover by the federal government of all health and hospital costs.

* The takeover by the federal government of all public education costs.

Two final items deserve special mention:

* Action against racism, in particular affirmative action on jobs and action to remove all barriers to the residence of minorities in all city and suburban neighborhoods.

* Mass action to organize Southern labor, including a campaign to inform people how the lack of organization there is a major cause of the cities' trouble and is distorting the economy of the entire country.

There already exists the makings of a broad countrywide coalition around the crisis of the cities. Liberal and even conservative mayors have been forced by the terrible problems to demand action by the federal government. Mass action in the cities could force much more from these mayors and the federal government. A coalition around the crisis of the cities could be an important part of a general anti-monopoly coalition.

ERA: New Trends, New Developments

ALVA BUXENBAUM

Since the 1976 elections, important new developments have affected the character of the movement supporting the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). A new climate of struggle has been created making it possible to push the implementation of the ERA in a direction that can advance the economic and political equality intended by its initiators and supporters.

Current demands around the ERA are being placed more and more in the context of day-to-day issues facing working women. They are no longer solely on the level of accepting the ERA as a "mandate" that will bring equality by declaration. The intent of the ERA can now be defined by the new level of struggle around affirmative action. The current question before the women's movement and the working class is: How to advance equality based on mass struggle for major changes in conditions—including legislation for women in the home, on the job, and in their communities?

Full equality for women must mean full economic rights in the first place—the right to earn a living at any job one cares to pursue under safe and healthy working conditions. For women this means the right to education, training and upgrading if there is to be equal access to jobs. It means the attainment of effective pre-school care for children and for public education and health care. It means political and legal guarantees that take into account remedying past discrimination and the inequities that have accompanied it over the years. Therefore, how the ERA is to be interpreted, by whom, and under what conditions of struggle, lies at the heart of the Communist Party's approach to support for its passage. The response to new trends and the development of a new situation based upon concrete demands force the interpretation of the ERA's intent in a progressive direction. It provides the basis for legislation that can lead to equality and consequently demands a new tactical approach.

New Trends Among Working Women

For growing numbers of women, the central measuring stick of equality of women is the degree of equality achieved by working women and especially those entering basic industry. Approximately 23 million women work in private industry. The main trend in the employment of these women workers is the shift from traditional to non-traditional jobs, until now held almost exclusively by men. The following figures from the *1975 Handbook on Women Workers* published by the U.S. Department of Labor give a striking illustration of this.

	1960	1970
SKILLED TRADES (total)	277,000	495,000
Carpenters	3,300	11,000
Electricians	2,500	8,700
Plumbers	1,000	4,000
Auto mechanics	2,300	11,000
Painters	6,400	13,000
Tool and die makers	1,100	4,200
Machinists	6,700	11,800
Compositors & typesetters	15,500	24,000
INDUSTRY GROUPS*	1964	1974
Mining	34,000	40,000
Construction	143,000	209,000
Manufacturing	4,385,000	5,736,000
DURABLE GOODS MANUFACTURING	1,717,000	2,563,000
Fabricated metal	192,000	278,000
Machinery (not electrical)	201,000	339,000
Transportation equipment	168,000	203,000

A history of racial oppression and discrimination produces a pattern of minority women in blue-collar jobs in higher percentages (19.1 per cent) than white women (15.7 per cent), but a smaller percentage in craft jobs.

These women, Black, Brown and white working together, sharing experiences and drawing some mutual conclusions, are having a profound effect

Alva Buxenbaum is co-chairperson of the Social and Economic Rights Department of the CPUSA.

* These figures include both production workers and other occupations.

on all other sections of women and on the whole work force. They have among their ranks a strong trend that cautions their sisters about the Equal Rights Amendment. This trend has warned that their support for the ERA will not be given without conditions. They have made it clear that women must have laws introduced that will protect them from bosses and provide them with conditions that give equal opportunity with enforcement. Many of these women have given examples of how bosses used the momentum of the ERA to take away rights in the name of "equal treatment." But the results of this so-called equality are greater exploitation and discrimination against women that is also eventually used against the men. For instance, protective labor laws wiped out recently by Title VII interpretations, guaranteed in some cases improved working conditions for men and women and were not merely "restrictive."

In steel plants, for example, there are no real lunch hours. Workers take their lunches when and where they can. In 1943, when women came into the mills, in those states that had protective labor laws mandating lunch hours for women, the companies had to provide this time. Consequently, men also benefited. Facilities such as toilet rooms, washing facilities, rest and lunch rooms had to be provided for women in some states by law. (See "Women as Steelworkers," May 1976 *Political Affairs*.) Thus, Protective labor laws therefore are restrictive when there is no struggle to see to it that they are implemented in the way best for all workers. Any laws under an exploitative, profit-oriented system such as capitalism can be used against workers if there is no struggle to prevent their abuse. Bosses attempt to eliminate these protective labor laws, using pressures of unemployment and the vague wording of the ERA to take advantage of women workers. They change job categories and qualifications for women to "equal" those of men in such a way as to place added burdens upon women workers. The same women continue to bear the main responsibility for housework and child care even while they work a 40 hour and sometimes longer work week.

In the process, many men too are eliminated from jobs, have *their* hours extended, *their* pay cut. Use of the ERA in this way is an abuse of the intentions of the growing numbers of working women and men who support its passage. It makes a mockery of what full equality for women should and must mean. It is this fear of misuse of the ERA that has kept millions of working-class women out of the support movement for the ERA. They are concerned that the ERA will take away rights they've won in the past, and preclude winning those they need for the future.

Affirmative Action Essential to ERA

Women workers, especially oppressed minorities victimized by racist discrimination and practices, need legislation of a compensatory nature (affirmative action) to make up both for the past history of discrimination and for the double burden many bear in the home. (Forty three per cent of all married women are in the labor force.) Consequently there are legitimate fears about leaving determination of whether protective labor laws are "discriminatory" to the courts. Affirmative action measures which take into account special conditions of women can be declared illegal. These same courts must be forced to interpret the Equal Rights Amendment to strengthen and expand Affirmative Action.

Affirmative action is essential for women and makes closer ties to oppressed minorities an absolute necessity for the whole women's movement. The fight for affirmative action has reached a new stage and the need to step up its pace has become apparent to growing sections of the population. Attempts to debunk and attack affirmative action measures have awakened more and more sections of workers to protect and expand affirmative action demands because it is beneficial to all workers. This movement includes the nationally oppressed peoples, growing sections of the trade union movement, youth and women. Affirmative action needs have also convinced masses of women to fight racism and to identify more closely with the movements of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian peoples.

Certain developments at the recent IWY conference in Houston were examples of a growing understanding of racism as a major source of division among women. It was first evidenced in the overwhelming reaction of support given to the comprehensive resolution on minority women presented from the floor by the minority women's caucus, as opposed to the inadequate one introduced by the leadership and appearing in the National Plan of Action. Second was the tremendous reception given the near-successful attempt to prevent the seating of the all-white Mississippi delegation claiming to

speak for Mississippi women, and including advocates of the Ku Klux Klan.

Ultra-Right

While for us these new developments represent tremendous new possibilities for real victories, monopoly and other reactionary elements are shifting their tactics toward the ERA. Monopoly uses reactionary forces to turn back the tide, to disorient and confuse. The increasing activity of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi party is also part of the picture. As long as the ERA could be left to vague interpretations and utilized to further divide workers, monopoly did not worry. But when monopoly profits are threatened these forces feel it necessary to move against the tide of women workers' demands. In this situation reactionary forces move to hold back the tide.

The ultra-Right is making the women's movement one of its special targets. This, too, creates a situation that demands new approaches. Their aim is to divert the movement by posing questions in whatever areas can be used to confuse and demobilize support. They are especially worried that current discussions and actions around affirmative action will not only strengthen the enforcement of the ERA but will win much greater support among the working class now that the issues surrounding it are being made clearer.

Possibilities for New Legal Victories

On the legal front, the Nixon courts (and the Carter administration tends to go along with them) have demonstrated their intention to limit and reverse equality for minorities and women where possible.

The original stand of the Carter Administration on the Bakke case, for example, was that it should be sent back to the California courts for reevaluation. This was based on the argument that strict quotas are not valid, although race can be taken into account. This position, essentially questioning the option of increasing the opportunities available to those who have been discriminated against, created such a public outcry in the Black community that Carter's attorney general had to retreat. Other reactionary court decisions were recent ones on abortion and on pregnancy disability.

Recently, however, there have been court decisions to the effect that different treatment of women and men based on biological and physiological differences does not constitute discrimination or violation of equal protection under law. Cited as an example have been separate bathrooms and showers. This gives reason to believe that the courts *can* be moved by mass pressure and by legislative resolutions of intent to conclude that the Equal Rights Amendment does not require holding protective labor and affirmative action legislation in violation of the amendment.

Within the women's movement for equality additional developments are taking place. There now exist some extremely important organized forms of working-class women.

There is an increase in the number and militancy of rank-and-file womens' caucuses and committees, which have established themselves as permanent features of the trade unions. Many of them either publish their own bulletin or have a special womens' column in their trade union newspapers. All of them play an active role in pressuring the unions to take more realistic and concrete approaches to the special conditions and problems of women workers. Many of them have acted as a unifying force between Black and white workers by forceful stands on job conditions, safety, and affirmative action. They have been responsible for getting more women elected to union office even in those unions that have traditionally been open only to men.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is an outgrowth of the rank-and-file movements. It is a formation of trade union women from various unions and industries. The fact that it unites women from several national and international unions enables women to play an even more influential and powerful role within the labor movement. CLUW, in spite of certain limitations, has helped clarify some of the basic questions that working women need acted upon in order to assure equal access to jobs and hiring. Strengthening the rank-and-file base of CLUW is an important step toward developing trade union women as leaders.

Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE) held its National Founding Convention in Septmeber 1977. The National Founding Convention of WREE brought nearly 600 women together. The overwhelming majority were delegates representing its membership of primarily working-class women. It included trade union as well as unorganized working women, there were housewives and unemployed, welfare recipients and

students among its delegate members. Perhaps its most impressive feature, however, was its composition. The majority of the delegates were working women—at least half were of oppressed minorities. This organization has already made its impact felt.

At the Houston IWY Convention a leaflet distributed by WREE headlined "Support ERA—Guarantee its INTENT for FULL Equality," was enthusiastically taken. Women read the leaflets warning of the dangers of misuse of the ERA and the need for legal protections. They read of the importance of strengthening the movement by linking it to resolutions of intent that can give a legal barrier to misuse of the ERA. Many women nodded in agreement as they read and welcomed this approach as an important contribution.

One of WREE's unique features is its inclusion of a broad spectrum of political views in its membership and leadership. It is composed of independents, Democrats, Republicans, Communists, Socialists and Liberals as well as church activists of all denominations. The Women's Bill of Rights has been the main unifying factor for these women of varied backgrounds and cultures and is seen as a basis for concrete legislation that can help win full economic, political and social equality for all women, with proper enforcement. At its founding convention, it was proposed, discussed and overwhelmingly adopted to enter the campaign for the passage of the ERA, with due attention to the special interests and concerns of working women: "WREE will work to strengthen the movement for the ERA and its real meaning by clarifying the intent of the vast majority of its supporters." It was resolved that "WREE launch a campaign for resolutions and statements of intent in states where the ERA has been passed as well as in states where it has not passed and that such statements make clear that the intent of the ERA not be construed to deny affirmative action or other legislation, past or present, which is beneficial to women."

The growth of these new organizations reinforces the concept that working-class women make the difference in struggle for basic progress. It indicates that working-class women are moving in the direction of playing a decisive role in the leadership of the women's movement. It means the ability to win large sections of women who have not yet been convinced to support the ERA because they have been fearful that it would not deliver equality and might take away gains already won. It places the struggle for the ERA in the context of the broader movement for genuine equality. It offers a strong argument against the attempts by the ultra-Right to confuse and disorient the women's movement by posing the false choice between loss of all protection for women and continued dependence and acceptance of male supremacy. It means greater ability to introduce *new* legislation that can guarantee more lasting equality by preventing the abuse or elimination of protective labor laws.

Finally the new developments in the movement for the ERA and the new trends influenced by working women, Black, Brown and white, clarify on what basis the movement for full equality for women can win victories.

These new conditions and forms of struggle for ERA can assure that its original intent is fulfilled. It enables passage of the ERA to make a contribution toward real equality for women that Communists can support.

The 1978 Midterm Elections

SIMON W. GERSON

President Jimmy Carter's recent nine-day, six-country tour predictably made headlines and the evening TV news, but it solved no problems at home. The polls still show him on the popularity roller coaster.

The Middle East meetings between Egypt's President Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Begin —skilfully orchestrated behind the scenes by Washington, according to some sources—brought Carter a few points in the Louis Harris poll (Dec. 19). But nearly two-thirds of those polled "disapprove his handling of the economy," Harris reported. (How some Americans will feel after reading about Carter's New Year's eve dinner amid the sybaritic luxury of the Shah's feudal palace, far removed from Iran's torture chambers, may yet be reflected in another poll.)

But be that as it may, it is clear that Carter left an economic morass behind him—at least 7,000,000 unemployed, mounting inflation and a huge balance of trade deficit. After all the public relations gimmicks of the tour have been forgotten, the nation will be faced with Carter's basic policy outlook as set forth in his State of the Union speech and his subsequent budget message. These will illustrate—as well as any old party politician's words can—the Administration's perspective for 1978 and beyond.

Already there are authoritative predictions that Carter will present the country with an austerity program the burdens of which will fall most heavily on the poor—the workers, the Blacks and other oppressed minority peoples. Political writer Art Pine of the *Washington Post* put it bluntly:

> Jimmy Carter is about to show his colors as a closet conservative.
>
> Although the former Georgia Governor campaigned last year (1976) on a platform of new programs that drew widespread support from labor, Blacks and big-city mayors, the fiscal 1979 budget he's about to unveil is shaping up as a model of austerity.
>
> Not only is the President not proposing any massive new social programs; he's also clamping a lid on budget increases for existing programs . . . And—perhaps uncharacteristically—he's seeking a sharp jump in defense spending. (Cited by James A. Wechsler, *New York Post,* 12/21/77.)

Pine's parenthetic nod to Carter's allegedly uncharacteristic attitude to military spending is clearly an act of charity on the writer's part. "Defense" spending has gone up under Carter and the proposed new military budget figure is set at $130 billion—a substantial increase over last year's $116-plus billion.)

Wechsler, a Carter supporter, added his own words:

> As a candidate, Carter unequivocally vowed to give top priority to economic justice and reductions in bloated military expenditures. Now the word is being spread, presumably with his sanction, that he believes social reform must be sacrificed to budget-balancing—while arms spending increases.

Nor are the above remarks isolated examples of the widespread disillusionment with Carter manifest among his former supporters. Reference has been made in these pages to dissatisfaction in labor ranks with Carter. (See "On Labor Political Action," Patrick Williams, *Political Affairs,* Dec. 1977.) Speaking last summer to the opening session of the convention of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), AFL-CIO, John Hennings, executive officer of the California Labor Federation said:

> We stand, I submit today, essentially with the Blacks of the Urban League and Black Americans generally who voice their disillusionment with the direction of government at this point with regard to the President.
>
> We stand with Brown America who also protested the indifference of the government of the United States to the plight of millions of Brown Americans. . .
>
> I think, in 1977, we have seen the futility of giving unqualified faith to the Democratic Party as an instrument of social change and social

And the OCAW president drew cheers from the the same convention when he told the delegates:

> We cannot depend on political parties and shouldn't tie ourselves to either party in this country. We have to make our programs and take our positions within the labor movement.

Last November, the Democratic Agenda Conference of 1,000 delegates in Washington, more than one-third of them trade unionists, heard

Simon W. Gerson is national legislative director of the CPUSA.

various labor leaders, liberal economists and Democratic activists, as well as socialists of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which sparked the meeting, attack the Carter Administration sharply.

Among the leading unionists who played active roles in the conference, which was built almost solely around the issue of full employment, were presidents William Winpisinger of the Machinists, Douglas Fraser of the United Auto Workers and Jerry Wurf of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. (Significantly, the forces of the Right-wing George Meany stripe stayed away.) Besides the labor figures, the conference heard from Rep. John Conyers, former Congresswoman Bella Abzug, Nobel laureate George Wald and a host of state and local legislators in the various panels as well as leaders of Americans for Democratic Action. The conference, the largest such united grouping organized in recent times, clearly mirrored the growing disillusionment with the Carter Administration among his former supporters.

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However, in the view of some observers, it did not sufficiently reflect the sense of betrayal felt by the Black community. It is precisely the Black people who were decisive in Carter's election and who today feel the most onerous burdens of continued unemployment and budget cutbacks in social needs—and all this amid rising racist attacks on the civil rights gains of the '60s and the affirmative acton programs of the '70s.

How do the Black people feel about the Carter Administration at the end of its first year in office?

Roger Wilkins, Black member of the *New York Times* editorial board, put it baldly in a pre-Christmas analysis (*New York Times,* 12/23/77):

> The mood in informed segments of Black America is grim this Christmas season as the first year of the Carter Administration draws to a close.

Discussing a taping of the Public Television show, "Black Perspective on the News," of the year-end conclusions of a group of Black newspaper workers, Wilkins described them as "uniformly gloomy about racial developments in 1977 and as pessimistic about prospects for 1978." He cited the remarks of Acel Moore, Pulitzer Prize winning *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter:

> One out of every seven adult Blacks is unemployed, he [Moore] said, and while the official rate for teen-age Black unemployment is close to 40 per cent, the real rate, counting those who have become discouraged and stopped looking for work, is 60 per cent or higher...
>
> They were all negative about the response of the Carter Administration to this problem, which they deemed critical not only to the Black community but also to the entire country.
>
> President Carter was roundly criticized by the panel because, as one of them put it, "Nobody expected him to be as good as he promised during the campaign, but nobody expected him to be this bad either."

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In this atmosphere of betrayal of the Carter campaign promises and disillusionment among his former supporters, the ultra-Right has taken a new surge forward.

Thus, the anti-labor National Right to Work Committee is pushing its campaign to get new state laws passed banning the union shop (20 states now have such laws). Reed Larson, head of the Right to Work Committee, raised $8.5 million, mostly from employers, in 1977 and got out 25 million letters, addressed primarily to voters and legislators. He is now preparing to get the scab right-to-work bill into six or seven more state legislatures and looks forward to an ultra-Right majority in the Congress which will pass a similar federal law. The technology of computerized mailing lists helps him pinpoint voters in every Congressional district.

Similarly, other ultra-Right groups are raising millions and using computerized mailings to attack affirmative action, busing, the Panama Canal treaty and arms cuts. Needless to say, the same groups—their political guru is Richard A. Viguerie, who runs a profitable political direct-mail organization—oppose detente and improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Beyond these groups—and sometimes overlapping them—stand the Ku Klux Klan and the increasingly brazen Nazi groups who flaunt anti-Black, anti-Semitic, anti-democratic slogans. These are the slogans that the more "respectable" ultra-Right groups find it more discreet not to use in their literature; instead they employ code words. But whatever the division of labor between them, these

ultra-Right groups express the ferocity of monopoly capital in its unceasing attack on the living standards and democratic rights of the working people, Black and white, and all oppressed minorities.

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All these groups and much of the media actively promote the idea that there is an irrepressible drift to the right on the part of so-called public opinion. It is to this "subtle but perceptible drift to the right" (*New York Times,* 12/4/77) that the Carter Administration is bowing in its support of big arms spending while slashing funds for social needs.

But there is substantial evidence that gives the lie to the talk about an alleged drift to the Right, evidence that apparently escapes the politicians. Certainly, the workers are not drifting Rightward. The stubborn strike movements among the Minnesota ore miners as well as the powerful rank-and-file movement in the United Steel Workers belie this "theory," as does the current miners' strike. The wide movement opposing the Bakke decision and favoring affirmative action belies this, as do the various polls which have shown repeatedly that a majority of the U.S. people support detente and the relaxation of tensions between the U.S. and the USSR.

Nor was this "perceptible drift to the Right" "perceptible" in the recent municipal elections.

Certainly not in New Orleans, where a Black judge was elected mayor with a substantial vote among the white population. Clearly not in Cleveland, where an independent Democrat bucked the party machine and won on a program that highlighted his attack on the local electric power monopoly. Obviously not in Boston where some of the worst busing foes, including Louise Day Hicks, were defeated for office and for the first time in the city's history a Black educator was elected to the school board. And not in New York, where despite a profusion of candidates, Barry Farber, the ultra-Right candidate of the Conservative Party, received a smashing defeat.

It can be fairly concluded therefore that this "perceptible drift to the Right" reflects no objective and inevitable element among the people. Rather, it is a theory advanced by powerful sections of big capital and a generally compliant media determined to make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. For the Carter Administration and some erstwhile liberals it becomes a rationale for accommodation to the demands of Big Business.

But how to explain in answer to the "drift-to-the-Right" pundits that in the last four Congressional by-elections, three went to Republicans in normally Democratic districts?

The answer is plain: the voters saw no viable alternative and simply shuttled to the "outs." This phenomenon, an old one in U.S. politics, is being carefully noted by the Republicans. It will become central to their strategy for the 1978 mid-term elections as they observe the increasing disenchantment with the Carter Administration.

But what if viable political alternatives are placed before the electorate, particularly the working people, the Blacks, the Chicanos, the Puerto Ricans and other bitterly oppressed sections of the population?

Then we can have a different picture as the country moves into a year in which the whole House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate and many governors and state legislatures are to be elected. (Nor can we forget some important by-elections in February, including New York's 18th Congressional District, in which former Congresswoman Abzug is seeking to fill the seat vacated by former Rep. Ed Koch, who was elected mayor in November.)

It must be stated frankly that at this point there is no viable mass political alternative of a national character. The mood of disenchantment with the Carter Administration has not translated itself into a mass breakaway from the two-party system. Leaders of the House Black Caucus like Rep. Conyers made this plain at the Democratic Agenda Conference, as did most of the labor people and liberal Democrats there.

But that does not mean that there will be no search for alternatives and no independent political action in the months ahead. It simply means that these independent actions will take on a variety of forms because the central issues—unemployment, inflation, racism, budget cutbacks, etc.—remain and will give rise to new forms of independent action. Many of these struggles will, of course, take on extra-parliamentary forms: demonstrations, delegations, petition campaigns and others. No doubt many will be closely related to developments in the second session of the 95th Congress which convenes this month.

A central struggle will be around the budget, with an increasing focus on the military budget, particularly around what is known as the Transfer

Amendment:

This is increasingly becoming the center of attention by ever wider sections of labor, religious, peace and civic groups. A truly giant coalition has made it a priority struggle.

In brief, the Transfer Amendment permits Congress to vote a shift of funds from one category to another within the budget. Thus, Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY) in the spring of 1976 introduced an amendment to the Fiscal Year (FY) 1977 budget resolution calling for a transfer of $2.5 billion from military spending to human needs programs. She got only 87 votes for her motion but an important precedent was set.

In 1977, Rep. Parren J. Mitchell (D-Md), leader of the House Black Caucus, introduced a Transfer Amendment which got 102 votes. A wide movement for the amendment was developed and the powerful U.S. Conference of Mayors, among other organizations, came out in its support.

Rep. Mitchell has indicated that the same movement will be developed this year and already a powerful coalition has started its drive.* The present head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Syracuse Mayor Lee Alexander, has made public a study, backed by a number of major trade unions, calling for cutbacks of up to $10 billion in Pentagon spending. The study was drawn up by Townsend Hoopes, a former undersecretary of the Air Force, and Herbert Scoville, a former official of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The Hoopes-Scoville report directing itself to the argument of the "Russians-are-coming" criers, flatly contradicts them. Reports the *Daily News* (12/22/77):

> Hoopes and Scoville said they had found no evidence that the Soviet Union was seeking a first strike capability against the U.S., but that "there is abundant evidence that the Soviets have been seeking normalized relations with the West."

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Clearly, the Transfer Amendment will become the focus of struggle for many sections of the population who demand a reordering of national priorities. It is obviously not the property solely of the peace movement. It is the common task of labor, already so recognized by a number of unions, and all manner of civic organizations who are opposed to feeding the Pentagon while starving social needs. It is obviously already a matter of concern to the heads of cities starved for funds for basic municipal needs. It is an issue that can be carried onto union floors, legislative halls and to virtually every community organization in the country.

There will, of course, be other coalitions and movements that will be expressed in this mid-year election. Congress will undoubtedly feel the heat of the demand for jobs, above all, and for affirmative action, and the members of the Congress will be judged by their action on all the burning needs of the people.

But while pressure on the Congress is important, there is little time to waste on preparation for the actual elections. Independent political action, as noted before, will undoubtedly take place in many forms, some in the old party primaries in collision with the Democratic Party leadership; some completely outside the two-party framework, while still others will combine struggle inside and outside the Democratic Party.

The Transfer Amendment and economic issues will undoubtedly be central but the emphasis may vary. Certainly there will be a renewed surge for increased Black representation, as for instance in the Illinois 2nd Congressional District. There will be new pressure for increased women's representation, clearly marked at the Houston women's convention celebrating International Women's Year. And some labor forces may move in organized form to get trade unionists into the Congress, a long overdue step.

While the Communist Party will run candidates in various areas under our Party banner, we will at all times encourage independent political action in a variety of forms, including:

1) Labor participation, especially through united front candidacies in selected industrial districts;

2) Pressing for Black and Hispanic candidates, as well as Asian-American and Native American candidates;

3) Advancing women candidates, especially working-class Black, Hispanic, Asian-American and Native American women.

While the various candidacies and coalitions will vary in level, objectively they will total to a movement against the giant monopolies that control the economy and government of the country. These movements in the crucial 1978 mid-term elections form a necessary stage in the development of a powerful anti-monopoly coalition that can bring forth a new mass peoples' party.

* Further details on this movement can be obtained from the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, 120 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

New Orleanians Break the Color Bar

BILL WHITNEY

On November 12, 1977, the people of New Orleans made history by electing their first Black mayor, Ernest N. Morial. The campaign was a heated one, centering around basic issues of jobs, income and public services. Although Morial's opponent, Joseph DiRosa, repeatedly claimed that race was not an issue, he used every opportunity to split all white voters from Morial. He was unsuccessful.

The results of the election and the manner in which it was conducted proved the possibility of Black-white unity around matters of vital concern. Further, the high voter turn-out and the pressure felt by the more backward candidates to respond to real issues show concern and a readiness for change on the part of broad masses of working people in New Orleans.

The Issues

New Orleans, like most other urban areas in the country, is a city in crisis. Unable to provide jobs for its workforce, faced with a dwindling revenue base, and suffering from a general deterioration in living conditions, the city's problems differ little from those of Detroit, Chicago or New York City. An extra dimension, however, is added by its history of Jim Crow.

Since tourism is New Orleans' number one source of income, manufacturing has never provided a large number of the available jobs. Rather, large numbers of young men and women have looked toward a future as parking lot attendants, bellhops, and waiters or waitresses. An hourly wage for a service worker of 65¢ to 75¢ an hour is not uncommon. Of all the major hotels operating in the city, only one, the Fairmont, has union representation.

New Orleans' number two source of income is the port. Through the use of containerization, the number of jobs for stevedores, clerks and checkers, etc., has steadily decreased. The disgust of rank-and-file longshoremen with the situation was recently demonstrated by their refusal to accept a new contract that did not include aggressive measures to reverse this trend. Even though the agreement was forced on the members by the International, their sensitivity over the issue of jobs remains high.

Given that the number of jobs has always been unsteady and the pay low, conditions have worsened during the last five years. Between 1970 and 1975 the number of manufacturing jobs dropped from 28,300 to 24,400, a percentage decline of 13.8. At the same time, over $3.6 billion has been invested in capital expenditures for new and expanded manufacturing facilities in the area. Most of these investments, however, have gone into shipbuilding, petroleum refining and primary metal production. Such industrial activity is in the outlying areas of the metropolitan area, and the jobs they do provide are unavailable for the majority of the inner-city work force. One of Morial's chief campaign aids has placed real unemployment in the city at something over 20 per cent.

The income picture is equally bleak, and offers an indication of the racism that is built into the New Orleans economy. According to the 1970 census, the city's median income is $7,445, a bad enough figure in itself. However, the median income for the Black community is only $3,683 or less than half of that figure. Of all the families living in New Orleans, 21.6 per cent live below the poverty level. Given the rise in unemployment and the drop in purchasing power since 1970, it's certain that these figures have worsened.

Coupled with the decline in income and jobs is the cutback in public services. Municipally run services such as sanitation and street maintenance have suffered considerably. The privately owned transit system has fallen into a state of disrepair and poor service. Utility rates are sky-high, and the city council has granted five out of the last seven requests for rate increases.

It was these conditions, then, that laid the track on which the mayoral race was run. Feelings of outrage with the sinking quality of life, of impatience with the half-hearted remedies being applied, and of disgust with city hall's catering to business interests fused in such a way that the majority of voters were convinced of the need for change and positive action.

The Campaign

By the time of the run-off, two major questions had moved to the fore: 1) did voters want new programs and policies to deal with urgent problems and 2) could an alliance of big business and the old political machine use racism to block a coalition for progressive change. The Friday evening before the election, everyone knew that the answer to the first question was an emphatic "yes." What the answer to the second question would be was still very much in doubt.

During the primary, Joe DiRosa gained some ground by campaigning against high utility rates, an issue of major concern for most voters. However, many voters distrusted DiRosa because he had racked up a number of bad positions as city councilman. Many observers knew that public sensitivity had become so aroused that even the most conservative candidate in the race had to make some pretense of concern on at least one of the issues.

As it turned out, DiRosa lowered his banner on utility rates during the run-off against Morial and concentrated on "fighting crime" and "fiscal responsibility." He opposed a metropolitan earnings tax on the premise that it would drive business from the city, and vowed to keep the city within its current budget. Having thereby admitted that he would do nothing about the urban crisis, DiRosa sensed that the only way he could become mayor was to do a job on his opponent, Ernest Morial.

DiRosa began a series of attacks on Morial for being "soft on crime" in his capacity as a juvenile court judge and of turning murderers loose on the street. DiRosa harped on this theme so incessantly that voters began to see that his real target was Black youth. Hints were liberally scattered to the effect that Black youth were the major cause of the urban crisis, and that he, DiRosa, could be depended on to deal with them with a heavy hand.

Morial took a different approach. Having soundly trounced his opponent in two face-off debates, he had to literally chase DiRosa around the city to confront him with the issues. Morial not only opposed a cutback in municipal services, he vigorously campaigned for their upgrading. During the race, he pledged to go after revenue sources that would not place additional burdens on the city's working people. While he favored quality public safety, he took an aggressive stand against police brutality, a menace that has enveloped the entire city in a reign of terror.

As a public figure, Morial has the reputation for being something of a trail-blazer. A well-known civil rights activist in the 1960s, he was the first Black to serve in the Louisiana state legislature since Reconstruction. Subsequently, he served on the state Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and as a judge for the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.

During the course of the campaign Morial managed to put together a coalition of Black and white community organizations. From the Black community, he received the active support of the Southern Organization for Unified Leadership, the Community Organization for Urban Politics, the Black Organization for Leadership Development and the Orleans Parish Progressive Voters League.

In addition to building a solid base of support in the Black community, Morial was also able to extend his campaign to include large numbers of white voters. Among the many groups supporting him were the Alliance for Good Government, the Independent Women's Organization and the New Orleans Coalition.

Even more significant than the endorsements of electoral organizations, a standard feature of New Orleans politics, was the outpouring of support from community activists across the city. Although the Central Labor Council remained neutral during the entire campaign, numerous labor unions, including Maritime and Longshore, gave a strong vote of support to Morial during the run-off.

Such was the situation on election eve. Although the groundswell of support inspired hope, the characters behind DiRosa were doing their best to buy the election, and, that failing, to simply flush the democratic process down the tube. The regular Democratic organization, a rickety vehicle for old-time machine politics, was spending large sums of money for last minute radio and tv announcements. Fearing that his campaign strategy had backfired, DiRosa initiated a series of legal maneuvers in order to disqualify Morial and have himself declared the winner without a popular vote.

By 10:30 on the evening of the election, the issue was settled. Final voting returns showed that the wedge of racism had not been able to split Black and white voters and toss the victory to DiRosa. The latter won only five of the city's seventeen wards. Overall, Morial received over 20 per cent of the white vote, and up to 40 per cent in some wards.

Precedent was broken; New Orleans voters had broken the color bar and judged the candidates by their programs.

Conclusions

Petty-bourgeois leftists, such as the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party, belittle an event like Morial's victory. They claim that Black elected officials merely "front for the white power structure," and dismiss events such as the outcome of the mayoral race as "co-optation." When it became apparent that a Black candidate, for the first time in this century, had a shot at the mayor's seat, they concluded that the time was right to field their own white candidate, and see how much of Morial's vote they could peel away in university areas. Thus, they continued a national policy of their sect when Black candidates are running for office. The votes they received, however, were negligible.

What interests us, however, is not so much the surface of the election as the dynamic of the campaign itself. The majority of the 76 per cent of the voters who pulled the switch on election day were deeply concerned with the crisis affecting New Orleans. The high turn-out is an indicator of this, not to mention the pressure felt by right-wing candidates such as DiRosa to respond to issues. The 20 per cent of white voters who voted for Morial showed that they were ready for a change, ready for new solutions to critical problems.

The tremendous community involvement in the Morial campaign, plus the Black-white cooperation displayed, not only on election day, but the weeks before, prove that large masses of working people are ready to move. The course of this movement, which extends far beyond the Democratic Party, is leading the vast majority of New Orleanians into conflict with the giant utility companies, the hotel conglomerates, the ship-building firms and the oil monopolies. Thus, a whole new set of questions are being placed on the agenda. These questions can only be answered by the growth and development of the broad, independent anti-monopoly coalition—a coalition based on the unity of all of the working people of New Orleans, and under the leadership of a democratic labor movement. The sprouts of that unity of working people have appeared in the mayoral campaign; the sprouts of that labor leadership have appeared in the struggle of the New Orleans longshoremen.

The Cleveland Municipal Elections

JIM WEST

The Cleveland municipal elections last November are significant chiefly for the trend they manifested, common to a number of local elections across the country. That trend is the impulse toward growing political independence from the two old party machines and for coalescence of antimonopoly forces.

The mayoralty victory of Dennis Kucinich, independent Democrat, over Eward Feighan, a state representative who was the official Democratic Party candidate, represents a strong rebuff to that party's leadership.

The Democratic machine had been in open partnership with the Republican Party to steamroller the sale of the municipally owned power plant (Muny Light) to the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co., to grant tax abatements to SOHIO (Standard Oil of Ohio), National City Bank and other big corporations and to promote a number of schemes beneficial to big business at the expense of the deteriorating neighborhoods.

The election represented a complete rout of the Republican Party. Incumbent Republican mayor, Ralph Perk was eliminated in the October primaries; all Republican city council members were defeated in the November final election. For the first time in memory the City Council will be entirely Democratic, divided between machine Democrats and more-or-less independent Democrats.

Among the incumbents defeated were the Democratic majority leader and other reactionary Democrats and the mayor's son, Ralph Perk, Jr., all of whom were in the forefront of the drive to promote big business interests.

On the other hand, progressive, independent-minded incumbent Democratic allies of Kucinich, including Gary Kucinich (the new mayor's brother) and Benny Bonnano, who had been earmarked by the machine for defeat because of his strong anti-big business positions, won handily. Bonnano and a

James West is Ohio district organizer of the CPUSA.

liberal councilman, David Strand, also re-elected, had attended the Warsaw Congress of Peace Builders and introduced resolutions in support of the Stockholm Appeal and against the arms race which were adopted by the City Council.

The city council will have 7 new members out of a total of 33. The bloc which is expected to consistently support Kucinich will represent a third of the council and additional support is expected on specific issues as a result of the shift signified by the election outcome. That shift reflects a growth in the antimonopoly thinking of the people.

In his victory statement on election night Kucinich, who at 31 will be the youngest big city mayor in the country, reaffirmed his campaign pledge to save Muny Light, to oppose more tax abatements for corporate wealth and to pay priority attention to the needs of the neighborhoods, which in Cleveland are overwhelmingly working class.

Recognizing the mood of the voters, Democratic Council President George Forbes, who had teamed up with Perk to push the sale of Muny Light and had vigorously opposed Kucinich's candidacy, reversed himself and announced on the day after the elections that he would now work to revoke the sale. Thus within 24 hours the election brought a big victory for the people and a big setback to the private utility.

Noting the comments on his age, Kucinich declared on election night that he wanted to be known not as the nation's youngest mayor but as the best mayor. What he meant by "best mayor," he said, was to be like Tom Johnson, populist, antimonopoly mayor at the beginning of the century, Tom Johnson fought the private utilities and brought the municipal light plant and the publicly-owned transit system to Cleveland. He is the only mayor honored with a statue, which stands on Public Square and is the traditional free speech site.

Significantly, in his victory speech Kucinich spoke of a "new urban coalition" which would unite the predominantly white West Side and the predominantly Black East Side. He singled out for special thanks "the independent-minded United Auto Workers Union"; the *Cleveland Call & Post,* a Black newspaper; U.S. Senator Howard Metzenbaum and Congressman Louis Stokes for their support. He termed the election a defeat for boss-run politics and big business interests and pledged himself to unite the city, Black and white, East Side and West Side.

This appeal for a new urban coalition, for unity of East Side and West Side, is highly significant. The pitting of the two sides of the Cuyahoga River against each other has been the chief divisive, racist weapon of big business and its mass media to keep the working class majority of the city divided. It was this that previously led to the defeat of Carl Stokes, Cleveland's first Black mayor and to the victory of Republican Ralph Perk, an outcome for which the big business press bears heavy responsibility.

Kucinich himself had played politics with this divisiveness in the past, particularly in the campaign which defeated Carl Stokes. When he decided to lay the groundwork a few years ago for a race for the mayor's office, Kucinich recognized he couldn't win without substantial Black support. Giving up his city council seat, he successfully ran for the city-wide post of Clerk of Courts. In that post, 40 per cent of his appointments were Black and other minorities. In the mayoralty campaign he spent most of his time on the East Side, came out clearly for peaceful desegregation of the public schools and promised priority attention to overcome the blight in the communities by waging a fight for adequate federal funds.

Together with his strong anti-big business stand on the issues, this resulted in his winning 35 per cent of the Black vote, thus insuring his election by the narrow 3,000 vote margin over Edward Feighan, the machine-backed candidate. The support of Congressman Louis Stokes and his 21st Congressional District Caucus was thus the decisive factor in the Kucinich victory and was a significant inroad into Democratic machine strength in the Black wards.

However, the fact that he didn't get the majority vote among the city's Black electorate must stand as a constant reminder to Kucinich that he has a long was to go to overcome the charge of racism lodged against him since Carl Stokes' defeat.

The coalition which emerged behind the Kucinich candidacy had no organized form. It manifested itself in support of the issues he brought to the fore in the campaign, issues which many organizations and movements had been advancing long before the campaign started. The organizations involved in these struggles included the United Auto Workers Union, the rank and file of many unions, all the senior citizen organizations, the utility, peace, and environmentalist movements, most religious

denominations and numerous such community organizations as Active Clevelanders Together (ACT), a coalition of over 80 Black and white organizations which began as a movement against red-lining by the banks and expanded the scope of its activities to many other issues. Many of these organizations endorsed the Kucinich candidacy, particularly because of his leadership in the fight to save Muny Light.

Against this array of forces of an antimonopoly character, the support of the Cuyahoga County AFL-CIO Council majority for Perk and then for Feighan, as well as for those school board incumbents guilty of deliberate segregation of the schools (which contradicted the labor council's support of school desegregation), emphasized the federation leadership's isolation from and opposition to the interests of its membership. This gives added urgency to the need for organized rank-and-file activity to bring the central labor council into line with the developing antimonopoly trend in the city.

Early in the campaign, the Communist Party issued its 1977 Election Program, "The Gold Mine That Is Cleveland," in 10,000 copies. The program set forth the class, antimonopoly issues of the 1977 campaign and clearly pointed out the real potential for crystallizing an antimonopoly electoral coalition which could defeat the Republican and Democratic candidates for mayor and the reactionary candidates of both parties for City Council.

The Communist Program made an impact early on, cutting through and exposing the diversionary, false issues promoted by Perk, such as his "anti-pornography crusade" and his widely-publicized arrests of prostitutes. It placed the real issues to the fore and was a factor in compelling Feighan to move away from Perk's position and to address himself (although weakly and vaguely) to the economic issues.

However, the absence of a Communist candidate for any office was a weakness which limited the possibility for an even bigger impact on the issues which could have contributed to a much more clear-cut, decisive outcome in the campaign as a whole.

Nonetheless, the fact that the economic issues facing the city's working class population did come to the fore much more clearly than is customary was a major reason for a 15 per cent increase in the number of registered voters. That increase took place on election day, made possible by an "instant registration" law enacted by the state legislature earlier in the year. It is now recognized that the majority of these election day registrants voted for Kucinich and his council allies. All told, there were 300,000 election day registrations in Ohio, 30,000 of them in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland).

However, election day registration was defeated in a state-wide referendum. While organized labor spent heavily in the campaign to uphold the new registration law, big business outspent the trade unions by far and its saturation mass media campaign sowed sufficient confusion to bring about its defeat. The rest of the new registration law, however, remains on the books and registration can now take place by postcard and at motor vehicle bureaus in addition to the established places.

The lesson of this experience for organized labor, like the lessons of recent attempts to organize the unorganized, is that money and high-priced advertising campaigns alone can't do the job. Organized labor must recapture the ability to mobilize its membership as a mass volunteer army for grass-roots activity on the job and in the neighborhoods. And to bring this about, the Communists and the Left are needed as history also shows.

* * *

Four seats on the Cleveland School Board were also to be filled last November. That election took place in the midst of struggles to desegregate the public schools.

It is noteworthy that not a single candidate, including incumbents, came out for continued school segregation or against busing. Most candidates came out for peaceful desegregation and for quality education, the rest maintaining a discreet silence on the issue. At least two factors account for this.

First, the pro-desegregation forces in the city were organized in broad coalitions which held hundreds of meetings in the neighborhoods in support of the federal court's desegregation ruling and/or in support of the NAACP's well-documented suit which won the desegregation order. These coalitions included the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, the UAW, all the major religious denominations, the peace movements and numerous community organizations.

Anti-desegregation, racist forces were few and ineffective, emanating primarily from a few Western suburbs. The leaders of this cabal, such as Congressman Ron Mottl, representing a mainly sub-

urban area, and author of a constitutional amendment against busing, were unable to muster any meaningful, active opposition. And the fact that Kucinich aligned himself squarely for peaceful desegregation also influenced the character of the school board race. His post-election statement that he would take vigorous action against any violence aimed at blocking the desegregation order reinforces the pro-desegregation majority and is bound to influence the school board as well.

Secondly, the campaign of Carl Edelman, a Ford worker running as an independent progressive labor candidate in many ways set the tone for the campaign and influenced many of the other candidates —as they themselves acknowledged. His campaign was based on clear-cut anti-racist positions and advanced a number of concrete proposals for upgrading the quality of education. He received 12,500 votes, more than 6 per cent of the total, and helped popularize the idea of labor candidates for public office.

The impact of these factors on the school board elections can best be gauged by the election night statement of Arnold Pinkney, Black president of the board, who won re-election with the highest vote—100,000. He said, "First, we have to do whatever is necessary to bring about peaceful desegregation, with a strong emphasis on the quality of education. Second, we have to do everything in our power to restore public confidence in the board in relation to our financial situation."

The results of the mayoralty and councilmanic races are a mandate to implement Pinkney's words.

The United Auto Workers Union played a decisive role in the election outcome. Kucinich's campaign manager was the president of the Chrysler UAW local. The new mayor immediately appointed him as his executive secretary and named two other UAW members to high posts. Thus, the idea of trade unionists in government gained ground as it is bound to when the antimonopoly issues advance to center stage.

The Cleveland elections represent a step forward on the road of antimonopoly realignment. The struggle now shifts to holding Mayor Kucinich to the promises made by candidate Kucinich and to ensuring the school board fulfills the mandate that Pinkney pinpointed.

And a struggle it will be. Already the drive by the big corporations to take Kucinich into their camp is under way. This effort was signalled in the last weeks of the campaign by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* which had opposed Kucinich, but suddenly switched and endorsed him when it became evident that he would likely be the winner. Since the election, Kucinich has been wined and dined by reactionary Republican Governor James A. Rhodes. Meanwhile the NAACP has warned that school board opponents of desegregation have switched to a new tactic of manipulation of school board finances to block the court desegregation order. Because of Kucinich's youth the power structure evidently believes it can flatter and wheedle him into their corner.

The immediate task facing Cleveland's labor, Black, Puerto Rican and progressive forces now is to transform the victorious electoral coalition into a broad movement of positive and critical pressure on the new administration to stand by, expand and deepen the antimonopoly course which marked the Kucinich victory.

Within this context, a stronger Communist Party and mass circulation of the *Daily World* are imperative.

Detroit Elections: Historic Firsts

THOMAS DENNIS

The results of the city elections in Detroit represent a clear victory for the people and a rebuff to the attempt of the Detroit Police Officers Association (DPOA) and other reactionary and racist forces to take over the city administration and the City Council.

Coleman Young was reelected mayor with nearly 59 per cent of the vote. Councilwoman Erma Henderson got the highest vote of any candidate running for office, 64.9 per cent, to become the first Black woman to be president of the Council. A Black majority was elected to the nine member City Council. Both of these are historic firsts in the history of Detroit politics.

The DPOA selected Black Councilman Ernest C. Brown to be their candidate for mayor, supporting him in the primary and final election. Since the electorate in Detroit is now majority Black, the DPOA felt that it would be impossible to elect a white mayor on their racist platform. By using a Black to front for them they hoped they could make it appear that they were not really racist, but only interested in "better government" and a "safer city." They also campaigned for a slate of candidates for City Council, camouflaged by the inclusion of some progressive councilpeople, in an effort to get a racist majority elected to the Council. This tactic also failed.

The racist nature of the Brown campaign can be seen in the fact that the campaign in the white community was conducted under the slogan "If you can't vote white vote Brown."

The DPOA especially wanted to defeat Mayor Young for at least two reasons. One is his fight for a real affirmative action program for Blacks and women in relation to both jobs and promotions. The aim of the mayor is to make the police and fire departments more nearly reflective of the composition of the population. This means drastically increasing the number of Blacks and women on the force and in positions of authority. The Black component has grown from less than 10 per cent to close to 30 per cent during the last four years. The situation in the fire department for Blacks was even worse and progress has been a bit slower. The DPOA and the firemen are now fighting this program in the courts, á la Bakke.

The second reason is that the Young administration has transformed the police from a virtual army of occupation with the concept that it is open season on Black youth into one where Black people do not have to fear for their lives when they are stopped by the police.

Many people in the Young camp had expected Young to win by a greater percentage of the vote than he did, perhaps 65 to 70 per cent. One has to ask why he did not, in light of the bland personality of the challenger and the anemic nature of the issues raised by Brown in the campaign. Early in the campaign it was clear that Young's characterization of Brown as the "First Black white hope" of the racists was in fact true. Why in face of all this did Brown get as many votes as he did?

First of all it reflects the organized influence of the DPOA and some home owners associations as a racist, reactionary political force in the city. This is pointed up by the fact that Brown came in second in the primary election ahead of two white candidates who also had the backing of conservative and racist forces interested in the outcome of the city elections.

There was, and still is, a tendency among progressives to underestimate the power and influence of these organized racist forces, because there is now a Black majority in the city; that this, somehow, precludes the possibility of a victory for the racists or the possibility that they can reverse some of the gains made during the Young administration. The result of the influence of such thinking is that the necessity for an aggressive fight against racism by white progressives is seriously muted.

The results of the election point to the necessity to draw the opposite conclusion. The fact is that the racists have a fairly large base in the city and are a dangerous, divisive force in the community and in the labor movement. Therefore any degree of complacency on the part of white Communists or white

Thomas Dennis is chairman of the Michigan district of the CPUSA.

progressives about conducting a most vigorous fight against the racists and all manifestations of racism in the city and in the plants will make impossible the forging of the kind of unity between Black and white necessary to preserve the victories won, let alone surging forward to new victories.

Second, Brown's vote was bolstered by Young's close identification with business interests, especially big business. Lots and lots of money has been spent in improving the appearance and attractiveness of the downtown area of the city. At the same time, there are serious problems of deterioration of housing in the neighborhoods.

There has been big tax relief for business to the tune of some $88 million, over $12 million to Chrysler alone, under the slogan of keeping jobs in the city. At the same time social and cultural services for the people are being cut to "balance the budget" and taxes are being increased.

People feel strongly that the problems they face daily of deteriorating neighborhoods are being neglected or given low priority in favor of business. When attention has been turned to the neighborhoods it is often a concern for the business strips and not the housing. Some of this voter discontent was expressed in a vote for Brown or in not voting for mayor at all.

The City Council results showed more clearly the growing political sophistication and leftward movement of the Black voters. It showed greater support for candidates with a history of being progressive fighters for the interests of the people.

Erma Henderson, who has a long record on the battlefield for Black liberation, a progressive activist for many years, the leader in the fight against redlining and many more such credentials important to the people, came in first in the field of 18 vying for the nine seats on the Council. She was the only council candidate to refuse, on principle, the endorsement of the DPOA. She will be the first Black woman president of the City Council.

The fact that Ms. Henderson got the highest vote of any candidate in the election is another testimony to her consistency as a leader in the fight for the people's causes, as a fighter for peace, to her strong ties with grassroots movements and organizations of the people. Her tenure as president of the Council could bring to that office a new quality, because there has never been a more people-oriented holder of that office.

The next most significant outcome of the Council election was the vote received by non-incumbent candidate attorney Kenneth Cockeral. He has a militant, radical image, even that of a Marxist, among the people. He was a leader of the League of Revolutionary Black workers. He defended and won acquittal for several Black people who, victimized by racism, reacted with violence. He had no labor or other major endorsements yet came in seventh in both the primary and the finals. He was endorsed by the *Detroit News*.

His vote and support among the people show that they are ready to vote for Left politics and candidates.

Another result of the Council vote that shows the maturity and Leftward voting trend of the Black voters in Detroit is the reelection of Councilwoman Maryann Mahaffey, who is white, with the second highest vote of any candidate in the election. She too has been active in people's causes, especially around social welfare questions. She garnered at least 50 per cent of the vote in every District.

The vote that Peggy Frankie got, running as a well-known Communist in the non-partisan election for the Central Board of Education, adds more evidence that the people are looking for more militant, radical and Left solutions to their problems. Peggy got 5 per cent of the vote, which is the highest percentage that a Communist candidate has received in Detroit since the 30s. Equally important as the vote is the effect of Peggy's active participation in the organized struggle to save the public schools and the impact of her campaign on that fight.

There is a Black majority on the Council for the first time in history. Depending on the performance of the two new members of the council, it could also be a Council with a progressive majority. It is safe to say that the new Council could turn out to be the best City Council that the people of Detroit have ever had.

To make this the most productive Council, all obstacles have to be removed that inhibit the closest working relationship between the Mayor and the Council on behalf of the people.

The outcome of the elections could have been even more positive had the labor leadership, including some of the Black leadership, not played such an opportunist politics-as-usual role. In the primary election four years ago these same Black labor leaders defied the labor endorsement of a white

candidate for mayor in the primary, and went out and led the fight that resulted in Young being nominated over the liberal white labor-endorsed candidate. This time they just went along the path of least resistance.

There exists in Detroit an unofficial united labor coalition that is made up of the leaders of the UAW, AFL-CIO and the Teamsters. They usually get together on most important issues that arise, and especially around electoral endorsements try to come up with a united position. They did the usual; they endorsed all seven of the incumbents. Herein lies the flaw. Two of the white incumbents have notorious records as racists and reactionaries. The "justification" was "the balanced ticket." Had these two not been carried on the labor slates, at least one would have been defeated. In fact it can be said without fear of contradiction that labor endorsement insured the reelection of the oldest and most reactionary member of the Council.

It is also clear that had they chosen to endorse the former Executive Secretary of the NAACP, Joe Madison, he could have been elected also. His election would have added a progressive, militant youth voice on the Council. Madison was an active leader in the fight for jobs for youth which is an added reason why his election would have been important. He missed election by less than 18,000 votes, despite an inexperienced campaign staff and the lack of money.

All in all this was a people's victory. But mass pressure of the people will determine whether they will reap the harvest of that victory. The danger is that people will feel that because they have elected such good people to office that their problems will be solved for them by these elected officials.

The ruling class does not relinquish power so easily. Nor do they give up their privileges and financial gains. They may have lost the election but they did not lose control over the state apparatus, and they still have full economic power in their hands. The state apparatus will still function in the interests of the ruling class unless the people organize to get what they voted for. People know they have to organize to fight city hall when there is a hostile administration in power. They will also have to learn that they have to organize to bring the power of the people to help friendly people in city hall to counter the pressure from the reactionaries and the ruling class.

While it is clear that the Black voters reflect a growing degree of political understanding and are definitely looking toward the Left for answers to their problems of jobs, housing, etc. the same does not seem to be reflected in the white vote.

The white people and especially white workers are being bombarded daily with an intensive racist campaign. Anti-busing, crime in the streets, law and order, welfare cheats, reverse discrimination—you name it, white workers are being assaulted with it.

In spite of all this, Peggy Frankie's campaign showed that white workers will join the fight against racism and racists when they are shown their self interest.

In the vote for Council there was an inverse relationship between the number of white voters in a given District and the vote gotten by Black candidates. The higher the percentage of white voters the lower the vote for Black candidates. This reflects the influence of racism on these white working-class voters, when there are no white candidates to carry the fight against the racists.

More important, it focuses the responsibility of white Communists and other progressives to move aggressively to the forefront in the fight against racism among white workers. Racism among white workers blinds them to the reactionary nature of the candidates and issues, leading them to act against their own self-interest.

Unless the fight is mounted by white people against racism it will be impossible to forge the unity necessary to fight and defeat the reactionary and racist attack on the people's welfare.

What is needed now is a comprehensive program that puts forth solutions to the crisis of the cities, to give direction to the fight. The Communist Party in the various cities must come up with such programs quickly and begin to organize and unite the people's forces to struggle to win.

A Breakthrough in Boston

ED TEIXEIRA

On Tuesday, November 8, the weather was wet and gloomy. Not so several hundred supporters of John D. O'Bryant, candidate for Boston School Committee. For several weeks there had been an unprecedented optimism in the struggle to break the racist stronghold in the Boston electoral scene.

This optimism was vindicated that midnight at the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts, where a post-election party for Black candidates was taking place with the electrifying announcement: "Kerrigan is out! Hicks is out! Palladino is out! Ladies and gentlemen, history is made in the city of Boston! Our first [in this century] Black School Committeeman, John D. O'Bryant!"

In a victory speech, often interrupted by cheers and applause, O'Bryant said: "I wasn't worried about a thing today. I was only worried about getting wet. We need this victory, and you know what? *The city of Boston needed this victory.*"

In the following days there was an air of jubilation, a sigh of relief. People in the streets, Black and white, congratulated each other.

The final results were:

For School Committee (5 elected—2 year terms):

* Kathleen Sullivan	–	39,593
* David Finnegan	–	35,633
* John McDonough	–	34,292
* John D. O'Bryant	–	34,047
* Paul Tierney	–	32,031
Runners-up		
* Elvira Palladino	–	31,955
Kevin McCluskey	–	22,682
Richard Laws	–	16,280
Frederick Barelli	–	14,195
Peter Couming	–	13,012

For City Council (9 elected—2 year terms):

* James Connolly	–	37,439
Raymond Flynn	–	35,652
* Albert O'Neil	–	35,539
* Christopher Iannela	–	35,488
* Lawrence DiCara	–	32,111
* Frederick Langone	–	30,372
Rosemarie Sansone	–	30,316
* Patrick McDonough	–	30,182
Runners up		
* Louise Day Hicks	–	30,054
Gerald O'Leary	–	24,198
Gerald McHale	–	20,692
* John Kerrigan	–	20,073
Arnette Waters (Black)	–	17,741
Laurence Blacks	–	17,127
Bruce Bolling (Black)	–	15,572
Stephen Farrell	–	13,799
Paul Ellison	–	11,773

(* Incumbent)

Two referendum questions favored by the Black and progressive community to provide district representation on both bodies in place of the current at-large system were defeated.

Question No. 1	Question No. 2
City Council	*School Committee*
YES—26,549	26,979
NO —30,365	30.710

Hicks and Palladino filed for recounts and were unsuccessful, both losing votes in the re-canvass.

The victories of the 1977 municipal election are the result of 20 consistent years of struggle by the Black and progressive community of Boston to wrest control of the city's governing bodies from the racists and reactionaries.

The O'Bryant victory speech reflected those long years of struggle in which he played no small part. He spoke of the three unsuccessful campaigns for school committee of State Representative Melvin King in 1961-63-65 (O'Bryant was King's campaign manager), then the two campaigns by Patricia Bonner Lyons (then chairperson of the Young Workers Liberation League); the many parents' organizations such as Operation Exodus, METCO, and the multi-ethnic committees set up by Federal Judge Garrity under the court ruling to desegregate the Boston public schools.

These movements were the response of Boston parents to politicians who through demagoguery were able for a time to block the unity of the working class in this city, which has had the highest cost of living in continental U.S. for three straight years.

Louise Day Hicks began her political career on the School Committee in 1961. From there she went to Congress. Defeated for a second term, she ran for and was elected to the City Council for three terms and in 1975 was the city's top vote getter with 82,000 votes.

Ed Teixeira is New England district organizer of the CPUSA.

Elvira Palladino, a co-founder of ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights) with Hicks, was a political unknown until she became a spokesperson for the racists and was elected on that basis in the past.

John Kerrigan, perhaps the most virulent racist in the history of Boston politics, arrogantly thought he could divert attention from the charges against him of corruption (padded payroll kickbacks) with racism.

All three had the open support of the John Birch Society, KKK and the Nazi Party.

The victory in 1977, however, was not complete. There are still reactionaries on both bodies, but it is certain that they have the message, because it wasn't just the Black community responsible for the outcome. It was citywide, although the turnout of Black voters was higher—34 per cent white, 40 per cent Black.

There also was disappointment in the defeat of the referenda which did not get adequate publicity. Also, many voters confused them with last year's attempt by Mayor Kevin White to create a lifelong kingdom for him and his machine.

The two Black candidates for City Council were relatively unknown in general city politics.

Communist Party campaigns in recent years have played an important part in Boston politics and this year's campaign saw the candidacy of Polly Halfkenny in the non-partisan race for City Council, which ended at the preliminary election in September. Many lessons and rich experience were gained, but this should be the subject of a separate article.

O'Bryant, age 46, is probably the best qualified candidate on the scene for some time. An active member of many community organizations, serving on several Boards of Trustees, he spent 15 years in the school system as a teacher, coach and high school guidance counselor.

The united front that made up the smooth-working O'Bryant machine were former students, many of whom led his campaign in hostile areas like South Boston, educators, trade unionists, and the religious community. It included such diverse personalities as Mark Roosevelt, a direct descendant of Theodore Roosevelt, who was his campaign manager, and Laura Ross, prominent Communist Party leader, who coordinated the campaign in wards 21 and 22. O'Bryant took a principled position in the face of a red-baiting campaign conducted by the *Boston Globe*. In his victory speech, he mentioned several Communists, including this writer, who were co-workers of his in the years of struggle.

Of Boston's 22 wards, O'Bryant won 12, coming in first in nine of which six were Black.

His campaigners chose 103 out of 252 precincts as areas where he might be strong and worked at pulling out the vote, with two 75,000 leaflet drops, one 54,000 piece mailing and election day telephoning by a team of 50 people who called every voter in the Black community who had a phone. Some were called several times. A public campaign to cast a bullet vote was conducted. In predominantly white areas where progressives had major responsibilities such as the above-mentioned wards 21 and 22, O'Bryant did extremely well.

The lessons of the 1977 Boston municipal election will be remembered for a long time and we consider these victories a good beginning of a new level in the fight against reaction in Boston.

American History: Illusion and Reality

HERBERT APTHEKER

In the academic establishment of the United States, the most distinguished historian is Henry Steele Commager. Mr. Commager began his teaching career back in 1926 at New York University where he remained a decade. Thereafter for twenty years he was a professor at Columbia University; since the end of World War II, he has held chairs at Cambridge, Oxford and Upsala Universities and now is Simpson Lecturer at Amherst College. In 1972, Mr. Commager was awarded the Gold Medal for History of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

With Samuel Eliot Morison, Commager is the author of the single most widely-used text in U.S. history—*The Growth of the American Republic*—and his massive collection—*Documents of American History*—has been a basic source book for two generations of Americans.

Mr. Commager also impresses all who have met him—including the present writer—with his cordiality and courtesy; of much greater moment, Commager was one of the terribly few eminent figures in American letters who stood firm against McCarthyism in the worst period. His pen produced some of the very rare essays that major commercial outlets would publish in that era which tried to remind the nation of the values of the Bill of Rights.

It is necessary to state, however, that Commager's eminence and the wide adaptation of his books result not from his admirable qualities and the felicity of his prose but rather from the respectability of his viewpoint. Mr. Commager is a celebrant of the "success" of the United States and is the more persuasive in this role since he evidently ardently believes in the myth himself.

Commager's latest book* is an elaboration of that myth. As its subtitle indicates and as its preface affirms, "the thesis of this book" is that "the Old World imagined, invented, and formulated the Enlightenment, the New World—certainly the Anglo-American part of it—realized it and fulfilled it." Commager summarizes the essence of the Enlightenment well, I think: "That men were not the sport of Nature or the victims of society, but that they might understand the one and order the other" (p. 71).

Let us quote, somewhat fully, Commager's elaboration of his thesis, the more so as we feel it is quite wrong-headed:

> It is not perhaps surprising that we should be skeptical of a society that preached liberty and practiced slavery, but it is surprising that we should be equally skeptical of a society that achieved a larger degree of political and social democracy, constitutional order, effective limits on the pretensions of government, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, civil liberties, popular education, and material well-being than any other on the globe (p.xiii).

This is wrong-headed because it misses the point. It is not a question of being "skeptical" of a society which preaches liberty and practices slavery and "equally skeptical" of a society that does some other things and does them well. One is not skeptical; one is condemnatory. And it is wrong to bifurcate this society so that on the one hand—alas—it was marked by slavery and on the other hand—hooray—it was splendid. Commager does this throughout his book; he will hail conditions in the United States and then, usually parenthetically, notice the existence of slavery as the "exception." But slavery in the United States was not an "exception"; it was a fundamental aspect of the social, economic, political and psychological life and history of the early pre-Civil War United States with which Commager's book deals.

Commager's book—like his *Documents* and his *Growth of the Republic*—ignores Black people, but any history of the United States which does this suffers from a fatal defect from the viewpoint of history-writing. It is only in his section of Notes (on p. 294) that Commager gives the population data for the United States in 1760 and 1780 and 1790 and these show, of course, that the Black people con-

Herbert Aptheker is director of the American Institute for Marxist Studies and has recently completed *Early Years of the Republic*, the third in a series of volumes on American history.

Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment*, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1977, 342pp., $10.

stituted about 21 per cent of the tabulated population, so that while in 1760 there were some one and a half million white people here, the number of Black people was well over 300,000, and in 1780 of some 3.3 million people who were counted, almost 600,000 were Black and in the 1790 census, of less than 4 millions altogether, about 760,000 were Black people.

In addition, these population data ignore altogether the original inhabitants of the United States and to this day so elementary a question as their numbers is a matter of keen debate among historians. But in this period the so-called Indian peoples surely numbered about 500,000 within the limits of European conquest and probably as many as one million. But except insofar as their presence impinged upon the European, these hundreds of thousands are ignored in Commager's text, and their *active* role in history is missing. This is again a fatal defect in writing "American" history, but when writing of that history in the 18th century such an omission is simply vitiating.

Further, in Commager's "Empire" there were no social classes—not only no slaves in any active and effective sense. That is, among the European-derived peoples, Commager presents a picture of this empire where "all the citizens belonged, in effect to the same class" (p. 127). While in Europe, he writes, the law "was an arm of the ruling classes" in America "law could be independent [of what?] and even radical" because in the United States one had "a ruling class that embraced most of the population" (p. 177). No wonder ingenuity, wisdom, sagacity, virtue are just a few of the descriptions Commager marshals (as on p. 176) to describe the directors of this empire. But John Adams, who knew the "rich, the well-born and the able" when he lauded them, and Thomas Jefferson who advertised for his slaves when they fled from him, and Alexander Hamilton who believed the people to be beasts, and John Jay who affirmed that those who owned the country should [not only would, but *should*—H.A.] govern it, would not only have been astonished but would also have been appalled that any one could believe that they would be presidents and supreme court judges and cabinet members of a state whose ruling class "embraced most of the population"!

The fact is that of the population of the United States in the period described by Commager, half who were women were outside the ken of politics, that one-fifth of the population who were slaves were outside the ken of politics, that another one-fifth of the population who were Indians were outside politics and that another fifth of the male population who were indentured servants were outside politics and that another fifth of the male population who were impoverished also were outside politics.

While, in the body of his text, Commager writes (p. 195) that in the United States in the period he is describing, "involved in their governmental enterprises [were] almost the whole of the white adult population" here he has simply "forgotten" the women and also has forgotten his own footnote (p. 184) showing that even in Massachusetts of the white men *entitled to vote* only about 25 per cent "bothered to do so" and that in Maine, as another example, the figure "was not more than one in twenty."

And again in a footnote—in his footnotes and reference section in the back of the book some of the realities of this period are buried—the reader is told that "the great majority of those entitled to vote did not do so" (p. 301n.). But why they did not vote is not discussed. There were many reasons, but probably the main one was the fact that there were fairly steep property qualifications for holding office* so that even if one could vote, since candidates for office were restricted by law to significant property owners (as well as believers in certain religious tenets, in many cases), why bother to vote? Clearly even those who legally could vote, under such circumstances, logically would conclude—and most of them did so conclude, apparently—that taking the time to vote would be ludicrous or meaningless.

Again, in his notes (p. 278), Commager remarks that some "champions of America were given to exaggeration" by denying the existence of poverty in the United States which in the text Commager himself has done, in effect. Commager then refers to the essay on poverty in Philadelphia in this period by Gerald Nash (published in the *William and Mary Quarterly,* January 1976). But Nash is only one of several younger historians who have brought some reality to the investigation of social conditions in the 18th century in the United States.

*For example, a governor of Massachusetts had to own a freehold worth at least one thousand pounds and the governor of South Carolina had to own one worth at least ten thousand pounds.

In addition to Nash there is the work of Allan Kulikoff, Lee Soltow, James A. Henretta, Raymond A. Mohl, Jackson Turner Main and, in particular, Edward Pessen—none of whom is so much as mentioned by Commager—all of which has shown the United States to have been a sharply class divided society (among its white population) with a high degree of poverty, a very considerable concentration of wealth in a relatively small percentage of the population and with a notable persistence of such wealth concentration in the hands of substantially similar families.*

The above is not written in any mood of debunking or muckraking. It is not written with any intention of denying the significance and the progressive character of the American Revolution and the *relatively* positive character of the new Republic given its era and place. But that Republic must be examined realistically and critically and dialectically; without such a Marxian analysis the truth about the United States at any particular period in history cannot be determined. Furthermore, without such analysis the source for the kind of development that the United States has had—from inspirer of anti-colonial and bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the world to bastion of what is left of the colonial system and main supporter of reactionary regimes from Pinochet's Chile to Voerster's South Africa—can not be comprehended. From its beginnings, the bourgeois-democratic nature of the Republic was scarred by slavery, male supremacy, racism, expansionism and genocidal tendencies and practices. The struggle against these atrocious features has been a never-absent and magnificent feature of the history of the United States and constitutes that element in its heritage which all defenders of the best in our past cherish and strive to bring into the fruition of the twentieth century—into that fruition known as socialism.

*For details see this writer's *Early Years of the Republic: 1783-1793* (International Publishers, N.Y., 1976), esp. chapter 11.

Sacco and Vanzetti: Their Friends and Enemies

ARTHUR ZIPSER

Forty years ago, in 1937, the International Labor Defense (ILD) published *Labor's Martyrs,* a pamphlet by Vito Marcantonio (then president of the ILD) with an introduction by William Z. Foster (then national chairman of the CPUSA). The pamphlet commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the execution of the five Haymarket victims and the tenth anniversary of the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. In 1977 we commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the Haymarket Martyrs and the fiftieth of Sacco and Vanzetti.

A fiftieth anniversary has a special poignancy, for on such occasions there are still among us some who played a role at the time of the remembered event. In 1937, for instance, 89-year old Lucy Parsons (widow of Albert Parsons, a hero of the Haymarket espisode) was still alive—and able to compare that year's Memorial Day massacre at Republic Steel in Chicago with the bloody happening in Chicago's Haymarket half a century before.

There are a number of persons among us today who were active in the defense movement which started after the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti on May 5, 1920. There is Art Shields, venerable *Daily World* reporter, who joined the defense in 1920, after being asked to help by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. And there is William L. Patterson, who joined Rose Baron's ILD group in those last days before the execution. After that he forsook his prosperous conventional law practice in Harlem, joined the Communist Party and has remained ever since a front rank defender of the oppressed.

Of those who were active in the Sacco-Vanzetti case some played leading roles, some played walk-ons, and some were extras in the crowd. There is no special dishonor in having been in one of these categories rather than another. What is dishonorable is to use one's moment on the stage as a vantage point from which to throw filth at one's fellow-actors. This reprehensible stunt has now been performed by the famous author, Katherine Anne Porter.

In August 1927, when Ms. Porter spent a few days in Boston, joining the last-ditch effort to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, she was not yet the successful author she was later to become. She was then 37 years old, a journalist, essayist and short-story writer whose fame began to be assured in 1930

Arthur Zipser is administrator of the American Institute for Marxist Studies.

when she published *Flowering Judas*, her first book of stories. Her most prominent work is *Ship of Fools*, published in 1962 and then made into a successful motion picture.

During the 'twenties and early 'thirties Porter was a hanger-on in Left-wing and liberal circles—rubbing elbows with Mexican revolutionaries, taking a job as a journalist with *Tass*, signing a petition sponsored by a *New Republic* group, doing a bit of heroine worship at the cafe table of the anarchist Emma Goldman in Paris. Now she has written a "book," supposedly about Sacco and Vanzetti, called *The Never-Ending Wrong*. (Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston, 1977) (I have put "book" in quotes because one may seriously question whether 63 pages really make a book rather than a booklet. Perhaps its price, $5.95, has earned it designation as a genuine, bona fide book!) It is expensive poison.

Let us leave Ms. Porter for a moment. We will get back to her later.

Though generations have grown up since 1920—when the hold-up murder occurred of which the two men were falsely accused—the case of Sacco and Vanzetti has never been forgotten. Many books have been written about it, several of them novels. Scores of poems have sung of their courage and pain; television shows have portrayed it; at least three plays have dealt with it, and in 1971 we saw a film from Italy which made the grim story come alive. All the artistic works which treat of the Sacco/Vanzetti case are in support of these two workingmen. How could it be otherwise? Not everything lends itself to artistic representation. G. Plekhanov, in his *Art and Social Life*, cited Ruskin, who said that "a miser cannot sing of his lost money." Can a poet damn Sacco and Vanzetti?

The fiftieth anniversary generated more than the usual amount of attention. There was, for example, the long overdue official acknowledgement by the State of Massachusetts that injustice had been committed in the case. If what has now been acknowledged by Gov. Dukakis had been acknowledged by Gov. Fuller in 1927 the men would have been set free. Dukakis asserted by proclamation that they had not been given a fair trial and that any stigma should be removed from their names. The proclamation was presented ceremoniously to the grandson of Sacco and to an Italian consul representing Vanzetti's surviving sister in Italy.

An element of farce was injected into the solemn anniversary observance by then-Mayor Abraham Beame of New York who was out for a second term in the November election. Beame, seeking votes from among the Italian-American community, proclaimed "Sacco and Vanzetti Day"—and then cancelled it. The mayor, it seems, had recently called for the return of capital punishment. When it was pointed out to Hizzoner that the Sacco/Vanzetti case provides one the best possible arguments *against* capital punishment he dropped his proclamation.

For over seven years Sacco and Vanzetti sat in prison awaiting their tragic fate. Their long agony attracted the support of thousands of workers here and abroad. This may have been expected. But their steadfastness, dignity, and their transparent honesty also aroused the sympathy of many people who would not ordinarily have concerned themselves with the fate of two Italian anarchists who stood accused of a brutal murder.

Among those who befriended them during their long passion were several good-hearted people from outside working-class ranks. Some of them came from that very stratum of uppercrust Bostonians that was condemning the men to death. Especially conspicuous in this group of notables were such women as Alice Stone Blackwell, Sarah Root Adams, Elizabeth G. Evans, Mrs. Gertrude L. Winslow and others of their class.

Katherine Anne Porter does not belong precisely to the economic or social group represented by the distinguished ladies above-mentioned. But she too is from an old American family—in fact, she is inclined to boast of that fact. Therefore when she took the Boston boat at a Greenwich Village pier and arrived at the picketline in those last August days of 1927 she must have been comforted to find herself in such reputable company as that of Lola Ridge, Paxton Hibben, Helen O'Lochlain Crowe, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Grace Lumpkin.

Now Ms. Porter has dipped into a packet of notes she made 'way back there in 1927. She didn't even peek at them for fifty years, she would have us believe. And she admits that "It is hard to remember anything perfectly straight, accurate, no matter whether it was painful or pleasant at that time."

It is a common practice for writers to squirrel away notes on their experiences, and Porter's six days in Boston were an important experience for her. Now—in her 88th year—the contents of her old

yellow envelope must not be wasted. The old journalist knows her market: 1977 will be the last big year for Sacco/Vanzetti memories for a long time to come—and the selling price for anti-Communist slander may never be higher in her lifetime.

And that's what we have in her *Never-Ending Wrong*. Sticking sharply out of a thick mixture of personal anecdote, petty gossip, parlor anarchism, and political infantilism is a pack of anti-Communist drivel.

Katherine Porter complains that "nobody seemed to understand" Communism. And why? Because it "sometimes calls itself Socialism, at other times Democracy, or even in its present condition, the Republic." In this respect she finds fascism and nazism superior, for "at least their leaders made no attempt to deceive anyone as to their intentions."(!) Doesn't she know who invented the Big Lie?

Porter throws away an opportunity to explain the Sacco and Vanzetti case to a new generation. She wastes many of the few pages of her book on irrelevant—and untrue—stories. Take the matter of Lincoln Steffens and his famous observation, after his first visit to Soviet Russia, that "I have seen the future—and it works." It is claimed, says Ms. Porter, that "he did not ever say such a reckless thing." She asserts that he *did* say it—and that she *heard* him say it, and wrote it down at the time—1922—in her notebook. Now it can be told!

The trouble is that nobody ever denied that he said it (though many may have wished they had said it themselves). After all he used these very words—or a close paraphrase—in his autobiography published in 1931. But Porter did not like Steffens: first, he was friendly to the Russian Revolution; second, he did not share her appreciation of Mexican *molé* sauce.

Flailing about with her whip-handled pen, Porter beats out random anti-Communist lies: "We... let the Communists dupe us into deserting Republican Spain." "They [intellectuals and artists] were lifted to starry patriotism by fraudulent Communist organization called the Lincoln Brigade."

Ms. Porter arrived in Boston six days before Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. She came at the invitation of a committee whose name she professes not to remember (wasn't it in her notes?). Most probably it was the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee sponsored by International Labor Defense (ILD). The ILD was under Communist leadership.

The group she was with was guided by Rose Baron. (Porter consistently refers to her as *Rosa* Baron, evidently a confusion with Rosa Sacco, Nicola's wife. This is the least of her factual errors.)

Many of us remember Rose Baron, who died in February 1961, as a fine, humane person who dedicated most of her life to the struggle against capitalist injustice and, most particularly, to the welfare of political prisoners and their families.

Porter's contemptible charge is that the communists used the case of Sacco and Vanzetti merely for propaganda "hoping only for their deaths as a political argument." She says she expressed the "wish that we might save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti"—only to have Rose Baron snap at her: "Alive—what for? They are no earthly good to us alive."

In the language of this proud descendant of an old Virginia family, Rose Baron was a "grim little person." Even Rose's eyeglasses offended her. She speaks of her "little pinpoints of eyes glittering through her spectacles..."

Porter's scurrilous use of the mass media to defame not only a woman no longer able to defend herself but also an entire political movement deserves a reply that will stand as a record for further reference. Such a reply was begun by Art Shields in the *World Magazine* (September 24, 1977). Comrade Shields cited the words of the famous lawyer, Frank Walsh, who had been head of the Federal Industrial Relations Commission.

When a liberal lawyer complained that "Communist propaganda" was endangering the campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti, Walsh told him: "They were kept alive by propaganda, especially the Communists' propaganda. Let's say nothing against Communist propaganda at this time. Let's have more propaganda."

From the earliest days of the case in 1920, when few outside the anarchist ranks had even heard of the case, to the final days of August 22, 1927, the Communists tirelessly worked to save the two men. In 1920 the Party had been decimated by the Palmer Red Raids but Art Shields, arriving in Boston to work with the defense committee, found the Communists distributing literature; and, on the final August day, 200,000 people came out responding to the call of the ILD, the CP, and other friends of Sacco and Vanzetti.

The first issue of the ILD's monthly organ, *Labor Defender* appeared in January 1926. It carried a piece by Ralph Chaplin on the Sacco/Vanzetti case entitled: "In the Shadow of the Elec-

tric Chair."

Following that there were frequent articles to mobilize support for the condemned men. In the issue of June 1927 there was an appeal from Henri Barbusse, the great French writer. In August of that year the entire front cover and the lead article (by Art Shields) dealt with the case and called: "Save Sacco and Vanzetti!" The cover and most of the contents of the September issue (which went to press August 16, a week before the execution) carried pictures of workers demonstrating from coast to coast and sought to mobilize new thousands in the fight.

Labor Herald, the organ of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL), was first issued in March 1922, with William Z. Foster, the great Communist and labor leader, as its editor. That first issue referred to the obscure case of Sacco and Vanzetti and called out: "Labor! Act at Once to Rescue Your Prisoners of War!" When the TUEL held its first national conference in August of that same year it adopted a special resolution pledging "entire and whole-hearted support" in the task of securing the release of Sacco and Vanzetti.

In *The Never-Ending Wrong* the author of *The Ship of Fools* has written *A Book of Lies.*

Ms. Porter describes herself as a "liberal." She also describes herself as a variety of philosophical anarchist. She also states that she has always been a Democrat and has always voted for Democratic candidates. Of course a consistent anarchist wouldn't vote for *anybody*—but then Porter does not emerge from the pages of her book as a notably consistent character. After her six-days' service on the August 1927 picketlines what did she do to earn her self-assigned title of liberal? Did she try to save the lives of Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, the Scottsboro Boys? Did she go down to Washington for the Rosenbergs? Did she oppose the Vietnam War? Did she contribute to the freedom of Angela Davis? Need one wait for an answer?

Sacco and Vanzetti had their enemies and they had their friends. Sacco wrote to the ILD in 1926 "Your unchanged solidarity... brought me a great relief, for your brotherly and upturned spirit that you are showing toward your brotherly comrades, victims of an unjust persecution." And Vanzetti wrote to the *Daily Worker* "...it is two days that I miss the *Daily Worker.* I know your solidarity. Here, capitalist press, state police are...lying, falsifying, clamoring for a more prompt sentence and execution.

"Please give to all our friends and workers... our brotherly regard and augural greetings." Sacco and Vanzetti knew their friends from their enemies.

How are we to understand Katherine Anne Porter's venomous memories of Rose Baron? Could it have been because Rose was not only a Communist but a Jew?

Porter has made her anti-Communism plain enough; she flaunts it. She is a bit more reticent about her anti-Semitism. We may pass lightly over her casual remark in her book that Amtorg (the Soviet trade agency) was "managed by a Russian Jewish businessman of the cold steel variety." And one may not want to stop to question why she felt obliged to refer to Frank Tannenbaum as "Jewish by birth." But one cannot ignore these remarks by Porter in an article for *Harper's* magazine in 1965 (cited in the *Times'* Sunday Book Review, July 10, 1977):

> I am an old North American. My people came to Virginia in 1648 so we have had time to become acclimatized.... We are in the direct, legitimate line; we are people based in English as our mother tongue, and we do not abuse it or misuse it, and when we speak a word we know what it means. These others have fallen into a curious kind of argot, more or less originating in New York, a deadly mixture of academic, guttersnipe, gangster, fake-Yiddish, and dull old wornout words... as if they hate English *and are trying to destroy it along with all other living things they touch.* (Emphasis added.)

Richard Locke of the *Times* comments quite appropriately: "This apocalyptic bit of literary anti-Semitism, for it is clearly the Jewish American style that she is describing, is quite startling to read today." Anti-Semitism and anti-Communism are old bedmates.

A fine tribute to Sacco and Vanzetti appeared in *Labor Unity,* organ of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers in August 1977. A reader of that paper responded with this letter: "Your story on Sacco and Vanzetti was beautiful. I remember my father cried like a baby the day of the execution and, in order to console him, I said: 'Don't take it like that. After all, they are not family.' And he said, 'They are more than family. They are comrades.' "

Let us remember Sacco and Vanzetti. They are our family; they are our comrades.

BOOK ENDS

The Temporary Government of New York City

MORRIS BLAKE

Jack Newfield and Paul DuBrul, *The Abuse of Power; The Permanent Government and the Fall of New York,* Viking Press, New York 1977, 368pp., $12.50.

Newfield and DuBrul's new study of *The Abuse of Power* by New York's ruling class is an invaluable contribution to an understanding of the city's crisis in its essential *class,* and broader national context. For it is only against the background of a declining and moribund national U.S. capitalism, incapable of coping with the urban deterioration its own still potent dynamics generate, that New York's special, complex situation can be grasped. "The city's crisis," the authors recognize, "is a reflection of a much larger national and international crisis affecting the entire capitalist system." And "New York City's plight is merely part of a much larger world economic crisis. Nations, as England's recent experiences have shown, as well as regions and cities are being torn apart in the scramble to rule in the new era of scarcity." (Unfortunately, one of the flaws of this admirable book is its too ready acceptance of "the energy-short world of tomorrow," as well as perhaps, the *permanence* of New York's "real government," which, in historical retrospect will no doubt turn out to be quite temporary.)

But implicit—and, occasionally, explicit—in the authors whole presentation is the thesis that the city's deterioration is the necessary result of modern capitalism's massive, multifaceted financial drainage and preemption of capital and resources, away from public access and control to highly profitable, private appropriation.* The thesis is not new; Karl Marx in *The Class Struggles in France: 1848 to 1850* observed that "the indebtedness of the state was in the direct interest of that fraction of the bourgeoisie which ruled and legislated in Parliament. The state deficit was, in fact, the actual object of its speculation and its main source of enrichment... The enormous sums of money which thus flowed through the hands of the state gave rise, moreover, to crooked delivery contracts, bribery, embezzlement and roguery of all kinds... The July monarchy was nothing more than a joint-stock company for the exploitation of France's national wealth." The message may not be new: what is distinctive, in recent writings on the subject, is the volume of specific, current, succinct and highly legible detail. This book is replete with personal names, city localities, buildings, projects, transactions ("deals"), organizations and capsule biographies, which make it as much a dramatization as an analysis. Moreover, the authors bring to their report a personal, anecdotal familiarity with many of these specifics. They have obviously drawn inspiration from Mike Royko's exposé of *The Boss* (Mayor Daley of Chicago, and his machine) and Robert Caro's portrait of *The Power Broker* (about the Robert Moses era of New York). But Newfield and DuBrul have a sharper, clearer theoretical cutting edge to their critique, reminiscent of the best of Lincoln Steffens and Theodore Dreiser in delineating urban class conflict in action, but much more concise.

Although there are a random few antiquated references to "the Communists... even during their most destructive phase," and "sweatshops in Eastern Europe, especially Rumania and Hungary," they are rare and superfluous to the main focus, which is how the "permanent government"—read ruling class—disinvests, devalues and drains funds away from New York's and other cities' pressing human and social needs. Chief among the swine at the urban trough are the banks, commercial and savings. The geographical "disinvestment" by the federal government in New York, as evidenced in the huge disparity of revenues as against disbursements here, is paralleled and aided by the massive capital outflow of the banks to more profitable zones of investment, national and international. New York City itself, not only unfortunate areas in its various boroughs, is being redlined by those who enrich themselves with working people's money. The basic condition of the "poverty" of the New York scene is not some inevitable and inescapable "shortage of funds"; it is the parasitism of the high-rolling "legal grafters"** and quid-pro-quo artists at the top levels—the fat and often worthless con-men in real estate, "fee"-taking, insurance, finance, contracting: the tragical but farcical "curious rise of [Christopher] Boomis," a kind of Bernard Kornfeld of urban construction, is but one example of many. The Rockefeller brothers of Chase Manhattan, Battery Park City, the World Trade Center, The Urban Development Corporation and the Housing Finance Agency are smoother as well as more notorious operators. Legalized fraud, extortion,

payoff are not excrescences; they are an essential element in the *modus operandi* of how the city government does business—and is done by it. The authors' accounts of the Con Ed-Charles Luce story, the Co-op City story and "the political economy of organized crime" would each make this book well worth the reading.

Behind the housing crisis, the medical crisis, the educational crisis, the transit crisis, the job crisis and the crime crisis is the crisis of capitalism, especially as operative in the world of finance and contrived inflation. Those who precipitated the crisis now preside over it with their customary solemn exhortations to sacrifice and "necessary economies." Surely the medics of several centuries past were more competent when they prescribed leeching as a remedy for exhaustion, than are the Felix Rohatyn's and Stephen Bergers of MAC and EFCB today. To prescribe the disease as the cure: such is the conditioned-reflex reaction of these self-described "conservatives"—easily among the most wasteful, *un*conservative people in history, who then have the witless gall to dismiss Marxism as outdated and dogmatic.

The recent Securities and Exchange Commission Report, and the obscenely banal, tedious and irrelevant mayoral campaign, both confirm what a writer on New York City concluded in the *North American Review* of October 1866: "We have undertaken to write something about the government of the City of New York, and yet we have fallen into a discourse on stealing. The reason is, that, after having spent several weeks investigating our subject, we find we have been employed in nothing else but discovering in how many ways, and under what a variety of names and pretexts, immature and greedy men steal from that fruitful and ill-fenced orchard, the city treasury."

The answer, as Newfield and DuBrul see it, can come only through more and better organization at the grass roots in the specific areas of public grievance. But, although implying the bankruptcy of the capitalist solution to the urban crisis, they are able only in the most timid and indirect way to suggest a socialist alternative. Nevertheless their specific suggestions for tax reform, federalized welfare, banking reform, a federal urban bank, rebuilt railways and mass transit, and municipalized utilities are steps in the right direction.

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* Annual debt service for the city in recent years easily exceeds either the welfare bill or the Medicaid bill.

** According to the authors, "Politics is business. And legal graft is the currency of the permanent government. Legal graft is finder's fees, title insurance, city contracts. It can be interest-free deposits of government funds, zoning variances, insurance premiums, or condemnation awards. It can be campaign contributions, bond sale commissions, public relations retainers. It can be real estate leases, mortgage closings, or, most often, legal fees. As Al Smith said one day strolling through a law school library and noticing a student absorbed in a book: 'There's a young man studying how to take a bribe and call it a fee.' " Truly, the expansion and development of the various techniques of extracting and appropriating surplus value, in the area of modern urban "legal graft," has been phenomenal.