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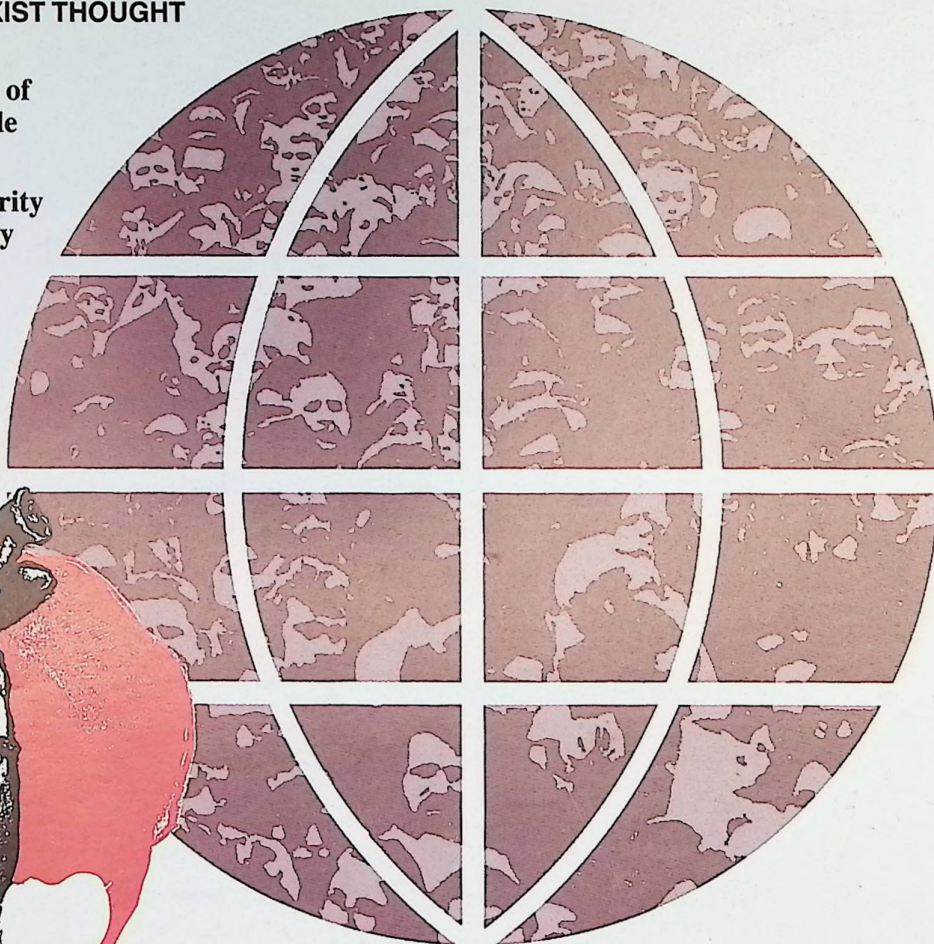
JOURNAL OF MARXIST THOUGHT

May 1986

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**One Hundred Years of
Heroic Class Struggle**
GUS HALL

**International Solidarity
Yesterday and Today**
YURI KRASIN



1886 MAY DAY 1986

MAY DAY

by **PHILIP S. FONER**

A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday 1886-1986

This is the story of May Day—a holiday born in the USA a hundred years ago and since 1890 celebrated by working people the world over. In this short history, Philip Foner clarifies the dramatic origins of labor's May Day and recounts highlights of May Day celebrations through the years. Here is a story with a multitude of heroes and heroines who protest the injustices of their time as they unite to demand shorter hours of labor and a world free from imperialist war. In a stirring panorama, labor's May Day banners affirm the struggle for a better life now and the bright promise of a future still to be won.

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INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

381 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

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**Theoretical Journal
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Political Affairs (ISSN 0032 3128) is published monthly by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc., 235 W. 23 Street, New York, NY 10011, ☎ (212) 989-4994, to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

Manuscripts are invited. If return is requested, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Subscription rates: \$10 for one year (individuals); \$15 for one year (institutions); foreign subscriptions, including Canada, \$11 for one year; single issues, \$1. Second class postage paid at the post office in New York, NY. Postmaster: Send changes of address to Political Affairs, 235 W. 23 St., NY, NY 10011.

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May Day: One Hundred Years of Heroic Class Struggle

GUS HALL

I had great difficulty deciding how to present my remarks today because this forum comes at the dramatic climax of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Appropriately, this congress occurred as the world was getting its first close look at the legendary Halley's Comet (also known as the Red Comet).

I had prepared my notes for a speech on the meaning and lessons of the fight for the 8-hour day and the frameup and hanging of its leaders, the Haymarket Martyrs, and the pitched class battles that led to the birth of May Day.

Then I attended the 27th Congress in Moscow. I decided that I could not speak today without trying to give you some highlights and insights about the mood, the spirit and decisions of this turning-point congress.

It is true May Day and the Soviet Union are related. Both are products of the class struggle. In fact, the congress was an international celebration of the monumental achievements of working-class power, of advanced, accelerating socialism.

Adding to the excitement of the congress, two other events mark this as a history-making moment: We are meeting two days after the Soviet Union extended, indefinitely, its nuclear test ban and landed two pioneering Soviet cosmonauts on a space platform, where they will live and work on a variety of activities. History will record this event as the beginning of the Space Age, when people will live and work in space as they do on earth.

As to the congress itself, in size alone it was most impressive. There were 5,000 delegates, mostly working people from every walk of life, 152 foreign delegations and over 2,000 foreign press, radio and television. The eyes and ears of the world were riveted on Moscow.

Speech delivered by Gus Hall, general secretary, CPUSA, at the *Political Affairs* Conference on the Centenary of May Day, March 15, 1986.

The deliberations centered around the future, on how to solve every human problem and meet every human need. It was a congress determined to "blend the grandeur of our aims with our real capabilities and the Party's plans with the hopes and aspirations of every person."

Listening, one could not help but be struck by the fact that the future of all living things on this planet really depends on relations between our two countries.

And one could not help but make comparisons between the Soviet Union and the United States—the vast differences between socialist and capitalist societies, which have become exact opposites in so many areas of life.

For example, while the entire spectrum of areas that make up the quality of life deteriorates at an accelerated pace in the United States, the opposite holds for the Soviet Union.

While our economy continues to deteriorate from a long-range structural crisis, while manufacturing and production facilities continue to disappear, the socio-economic foundation of the Soviet Union is so sound that the CPSU Congress could make a decision to double everything in the next 15 years, to double all production—machinery, technology, cars, housing, clothing, wages, hospitals, schools, railroads, air services as well as all human services.

For 68 years the Soviet people have labored to rebuild and then develop an economic and technological base that will now make it possible for them to accomplish such a grand fifteen year plan.

For example, in the next four years they will complete the housing reconstruction started after World War II, when 30 per cent of their housing was destroyed. In four years there will be a house or apartment for every family.

Thoughts naturally turn to our 5 million

homeless and the many more millions doubling up, losing their homes and farms, the poverty-ridden inner city slums and the 30 million living below the poverty level.

There are no homeless, jobless or hungry people in the Soviet Union.

- No one goes without complete medical, health and dental care.
- No child grows without a complete education.
- No Soviet citizen worries about his or her future, family or personal security. This is not a dream world. It is socialist reality.

I was startled for a second when I heard a speaker say, "Of course we have no system of unemployment insurance," until he added, "because we have no unemployment."

And there is no racism or anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

At the Soviet Congress, while 113 nationalities spoke with one voice of their warm mutual appreciation, of total equality, from the halls of the U.S. Congress the world recoiled as it heard the ugly words, "This little flunkey, Mr. Posner, who was born a Jew—this disloyal, betraying little Jew." And reports from the U.S. press tell stories of racist violence, of houseburnings, of Afro-American unemployment.

The congress took a critical look at all phases of life and activity. This was necessary because the new level of socialism requires a new kind of leadership, a new style and new approach.

A vital part of the new strategy is the turning over of political and economic responsibilities to what we would call city councils.

Typical of the critical speeches was that of a retired coal miner. He told how he had visited the cosmonauts' training center. He said he watched them training on what was essentially the same kind of power drill miners use. As he was speaking, he turned to the head of the Academy of Sciences and asked, "Why have you not presented the coal miners with the same kind of power drill, one that is noiseless?"

Then collective farmers raised hell because the building of swimming pools on their farms is progressing too slowly. They were hard on all

forms of bureaucracy.

For instance, the delegates are very critical about the rate of industrial growth, and they plan to double it. But this is in the context of the fact that in recent years the rate of economic growth has been larger than in the U.S. So there is growth, but there's a feeling they can and must do better.

All the criticism was done in the context of recognizing the monumental accomplishments.

As the agenda moved from one area to another, one could not help but wonder how it is the Soviet Union just sent two scientific space probes to study the once-in-a-lifetime appearance of Halley's comet and the U.S. did not.

Americans can not help but wonder, why is it that the Soviet Union is now putting into space a permanent work laboratory and the U.S. scientific community is only in the talking stage?

Why is the Soviet Union now planting cotton and grains germinated in outer space, while the U.S. is busy retrieving the remains of the Challenger astronauts?

Why do the Soviet scientists have dozens of space vehicles either under construction or on their way to faraway places while the U.S. space program for peaceful exploration of outer space has come to a complete standstill?

To add to the contradiction, the U.S. is about to turn over outer space exploration to private corporations as a new field for corporate profits.

The answers are only too obvious. The Soviet Union, as a socialist state, follows a policy of peace and ending the nuclear weapons race, while the Reagan Administration and the Pentagon continue to pursue a policy of nuclear superiority and nuclearization of outer space. These policies move in opposite directions.

In a sense they are the opposite policies reflecting the interests of the two classes. In the world arena, they represent the class struggle.

The Reagan-Pentagon policies are in the interest of corporate America and corporate profits. The Soviet policies reflect the working class and all peoples' interests.

The Soviet Union has just announced the extension of its August 6 moratorium on nuclear testing. It has announced to the world that it will extend the March 31 deadline indefinitely—until the U.S. explodes a nuclear weapon. This act was a logical outcome of the 27th Congress and its quest for ending the nuclear nightmare.

This act puts tremendous pressure on the Reagan Administration not to test and a tremendous responsibility on the U.S. peace majority to insure that the Reagan Administration joins the USSR in ending nuclear testing.

The nuclear ball is totally in the Reagan court. The world is now convinced: the Soviet leadership is for ending the arms race and totally eliminating all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth, forever.

Because of the continuing Reagan provocations, the hostile rhetoric and acts, and the trillion dollar war budgets, I got a distinct impression the Soviet leadership was coming to the conclusion that the Reagan Administration does not want another summit, that it is moving in the opposite direction from the Soviets.

The Soviet people and their leaders, including Mikhail Gorbachev, very much want the September summit.

In my remarks to their congress, I welcomed Gorbachev's coming visit. Afterwards, he asked, "You mean I should come without conditions?" I replied that it isn't the best way, but that, yes, I thought he should come under any conditions. I said he would be speaking not only to official circles, but also to the American people.

In its words and deeds the Soviet Union has taken very seriously the joint summit statement that "a nuclear war can not be won and must not be fought." Translating the essence of the summit talks into deeds, the Soviet Union proposed a step-by-step plan to eliminate all nuclear weapons in fifteen years.

To which the U.S. responded by ordering the Soviet mission to the United Nations to cut its personnel, in effect expelling them from the U.S., on the incredible charge that their real

mission is spying.

You may wonder why the Soviet Union makes such bold, risky and friendly moves when the U.S. not only does not reciprocate but does one thing after another that is provocative, hostile and insulting.

It is because they have great confidence in the American people and in their power to force the Reagan Administration to take seriously the summit process.

Reagan is well aware that the American people have taken very seriously the results of Summit I and that they have high hopes for the process and the promise.

The American people are looking forward to welcoming Gorbachev to the U.S. This places a very special responsibility on the organized peace movement to galvanize the American peace sentiments into a force that can exert irresistible pressure on the Reagan Administration.

I had a chance to speak to people from every corner of the globe. It wasn't the case a year or two ago, but today you don't meet anyone who doesn't say that the obstacle to peace is the Reagan Administration.

The whole world is beginning to see Reagan as the phony con artist he is. Daily, he keeps adding to the saga of Big Lie Reaganism.

Unshamedly, he continues to push his phony line, mouthing what he thinks the American people want to hear, while doing the opposite.

Reagan's lying logic goes this way:

- the way to put an end to the arms race is to build the biggest nuclear arsenal in history.

- the way to peacefully and politically settle so-called regional conflicts in Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kampuchea and the Middle East is to supply the latest offensive weapons to cutthroat mercenaries trying to overthrow legitimate governments.

- the way to build friendly relations with socialist countries is to keep insulting them, expel their representatives or put them under virtual house arrest, as they did with the diplomats from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic.

- Adding another item to his long list of

frauds, Reagan is now claiming he helped the Filipino people get rid of Marcos. People are driving out reactionary military dictators who have been U.S.-armed and -funded puppets. Now that U.S. imperialism can no longer keep them in power, Reagan is claiming he helped get rid of them.

Doing a con job on Congress, just yesterday Reagan announced he is equally against Left and Right dictatorships as a last-ditch attempt to get \$100 million for the Nicaraguan gangsters.

- In Reagan's book the way to get equality for Afro-Americans and other oppressed peoples is to preserve equally the inequality that is the product of 200 years of racism.

- Reagan's idea of how to cut the national debt and the national budget is to add to the military budget, cut the tax rate for the rich and cut all people-helping programs.

- Reagan's idea of helping workers is to destroy trade unions and cut wages to save jobs.

- While millions go hungry, homeless and jobless, Reagan and his whole cabinet cabal are on a gun-peddling rampage trying to prop up the counterrevolutionaries in Nicaragua in a vain but bloody attempt to overthrow the legitimate government.

With this no-holds-barred McCarthyite campaign and the time-worn national security flim-flam, the Reaganites are fast earning the mantle of such monsters as Hitler, Goebbels, Mussolini, Tojo and their own puppets like Pinochet, Somoza, Batista and Duvalier.

Let me sum up the congress in its totality by quoting Gorbachev's widely-studied report:

A new way of life has taken shape, based on the principles of socialist justice, in which there are neither oppressors nor oppressed, neither exploiters nor exploited, in which power belongs to the people. Its distinctive features are collectivism and comradesly mutual assistance, triumph of the ideas of freedom, unbreakable unity between the rights and duties of every member of society, the dignity of the individual and true humanism. Socialism is a realistic option open to all humanity, an example projected into the future.

New proof of socialism's "true humanism" is the Soviet pledge never again to explode a nuclear weapon as long as the U.S. does not. This means the nuclear arms race can now come to a complete halt, *if*, that is, the Reagan Administration does not break the ban.

You will be hearing much more about the Soviet Congress in the days and weeks to come. But I wanted to give you just some of the highlights as an introduction to my remarks on the 100th anniversary of May Day.

Although born in the United States, May Day spread to all corners of the world and has become a truly international day to express labor's strength, solidarity and victories.

In the million year span of human history, 100 years is but a brief moment. The 100 years since the class battles that gave birth to May Day have been filled with great victories and achievements of the working class.

In these years of pitched battles and hardship and through hard work and union organizing, the American working class fought its way from a downtrodden, dispersed and oppressed laboring mass to the most organized, central driving force for social progress in our capitalist society. More than ever, the class struggle has become the jetstream of history.

The victories of the world revolutionary process are monuments to the prophetic speech of August Spies at the opening of the Haymarket kangaroo court:

In addressing this court I speak as a representative of one class to the representative of another class. And if you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labor movement, if this is your opinion, then hang us. But here you tread upon a spark. But there and everywhere flames will blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You can not put it out.

Clearly, Spies had the class struggle in mind.

The years of working-class victories are also a grand tribute to the last words of Albert Parsons before his hanging: "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful

than the voice you strangle today."

Parsons, too, spoke as one with the class struggle.

Because of the class struggle, the "subterranean fires" have continued to flare everywhere in class battles and the silence from the Haymarket gallows has become the loudest and clearest working-class voice the world over.

The heroic class struggle achievements are also monuments to the farseeing Karl Marx, who was able to make the connection between the Haymarket era and May Day, and history and the class struggle:

Out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose.

Thus, the first fruit of the Civil War was the 8-hour struggles that ran with seven-league boots from New England to California.

Here too, Karl Marx saw the class struggle as the driving force of history.

Thus, when we pay tribute to labor and its achievements, it is the class struggle that we are honoring.

There have been other holidays set aside to recognize and pay tribute to the achievements of working men and women. In fact, this was the original meaning of the Fourth of July. In the early years after the American Revolution and until the end of the nineteenth century, July 4 was set aside to honor labor. But for one hundred years, *only* May Day has retained the unique, radical, militant, class-struggle character of mass protest, of marches and demonstrations for workers' demands, a day to display labor's strength, unity and international solidarity.

The half-million workers who downed tools and walked off jobs to march on the first May Day set the pattern, the theme and tone that has been expressed every May Day since.

What has given May Day this unique character is the fact that it was cast in the furnace of the class struggle and that through the years it has maintained its inherited characteristics.

May Day serves the purpose of paying tribute to labor's heroes and heroines. But its greatest significance is in restating and reasserting

the centrality of the class struggle. In a sense, it restates something that would seem to be obvious. At least it should be the most obvious characteristic of a capitalist society, because it is the main irreconcilable contradiction of our class society.

Unfortunately, it is not so obvious to the many who are confused. And it is all too obvious to those who deliberately distort this central fact of life under capitalism.

It is not obvious because there has been and continues to be a most persistent and elaborate campaign to deny its existence, to cover it up, to downgrade and to bury it.

It is possible to do this mainly because the working class is often not seen as a class. For example, the class composition of a demonstration is not visible to the eye, although the majority of demonstrators are trade unionists and workers. Although the majority of civil rights and anti-war demonstrations were made up of working people, most often the speakers were professionals or intellectuals, the visible ones.

However, the reality is that the vast majority at demonstrations are working people, trade union activists, men and women, rank and file, trade union leaders, working, laidoff, on strike.

To deny or cover up the centrality of the class struggle is to deny the very existence of the main mover of history. To deny the centrality of the class struggle is to deny the root cause of all forms of oppression. It is to deny the root source and mainstay of all forms of class collaborationist sellouts.

Denying the reality of the class struggle is the polluted fountainhead for all brands of Trotskyism, Maoism, Eurocommunism and, of course, Browderism. The demarcation line, the dividing line in all fields of thought, including philosophy, has its source in the class struggle.

To deny or downgrade the class struggle is to accept the concepts inherent in the phony ideology of a classless capitalism, classless politics and classless philosophy. To push a classless capitalism, classless politics, classless philosophy and culture is to run interference for monopoly capitalism. It is a way of defending the indefensible, of justifying the unjustifiable.

Some advocates of a classless world no longer feel they can say it outright, but instead hint at it, with phrases like: "As a philosophical and economic theory Marxism has had its golden age." Or, "concepts of class struggle and revolutions are today no more than echoes of a great, age-old myth."

Another American professor argues: "The scientific revolution has made the exploitation of nature so effective that the exploitation of man by man has become unprofitable and obsolete." The main problem with this is that computers and the unemployed are not paying customers.

Out of these conjured-up theories one is supposed to draw the real-life conclusion that the class struggle itself has become obsolete, has, in fact, disappeared. Then we are supposed to draw the logical conclusion that if the class struggle has become nothing more than an old myth, the working class has been so transformed that it has joined the ranks of the exploiters and is no longer a class unto itself and thus has no independent class positions.

Then, we are irresistably compelled to draw the conclusion that trade unions are disappearing or losing their place and role in society.

The final conclusion in this illogical sequence of deductions is that because of all these changes—because the class struggle has disappeared, because trade unions are outmoded—there is, therefore, certainly no need for a revolutionary working-class party like the Communist Party, USA.

The truth is that, in spite of the rhetoric from the nitpicking antilabor forces, it is not the class struggle that is "an echo of an old myth." It is not the working class and revolutionaries that are "obsolete." From their nitpicking dream-world they conjure up the ultimate fantasy—that there never has been anything to echo or to become obsolete because for them the class struggle *never* existed.

Thus the ideological trap is sprung. This is the main aim and the ultimate result of rejecting and denying the very existence of the class struggle. Fortunately, the direction of history is not determined by the negative, antilabor nit-

pickers.

The class struggle is in the very center of the law-governed process of socio-economic development. And this law-governed process of history moves irrevocably in a forward, progressive direction. The propellent, the moving force of this progressive direction, is the working class on the winning side of the class struggle.

Since the first May Day, the class struggle scoreboard has recorded setbacks and lost innings. But in the total games played and won, the working class is in a world-class all by itself.

The establishment of socialism in over one-third of the world is the greatest of all working-class victories.

The 27th Congress was a reflection of the crowning achievements of working-class economic and political power. One can say that for some 68 years socialism has won the class struggle world series every year. This is the result of better planning, better coaching and management, better pitching, more home runs and superior teamwork.

The working class was the main force in saving the world from Hitler fascism.

The working class has been the dominant force in the victories of national liberation. And, after liberation, it is the decisive force in choosing the new direction of the country.

This is demonstrated in the present debate over what the developing countries should do about the trillion dollar debt owed to imperialist banks and governments. Because of their class viewpoint, the working-class organizations generally take the position that these loans should be cancelled because the imperialist banks and governments have collected more than the trillion in unjustified interest payments and unfair trade relations.

The working class has become the main force in the struggle against all forms of imperialism, oppression and aggression.

The struggle for peace and the effects of the devastating military budgets on economic conditions has moved the issue of war or peace into the arena of the class struggle. On critical flash-

point issues such as Central America, Nicaragua, El Salvador and South Africa, the working class has moved into leadership.

In the capitalist countries, including the United States, the working class has become the most consistent antimonopoly force. The rise of monstrous multinational corporations, whose tentacles reach across national boundaries, has given them new sources of extra profits and new maneuverability. These multinationals and the internationalization of capital and production presents the working class and the class struggle with a new kind of challenge. In a sense, it dictates the need for internationalization of the class struggle.

As a minimum, this calls for new kinds of international class unity, for new tactics, such as multinational union strikes against the multinational corporations, worldwide boycotts of products, international labor contracts.

On this one hundredth May Day anniversary, the U.S. working class and the class struggle confront the challenge of the continuing Reagan-corporate antilabor racist offensive. The labor movement has to find ways to go from defensive struggles, from policies of taking cutbacks and concessions, to offensive fightback struggles.

The trade unions face the problems resulting from the fusion of huge corporate galaxies. The GE-RCA and Hughes Aircraft-GM mergers produced trillion dollar monsters. The multibillion dollar military monopolies like Boeing, Lockheed, General Dynamics and McDonnell-Douglas have developed into the corrupt, reactionary core of the military monopoly complex, corporations making most of their profits from military production.

The emergence of new technology is also creating new problems for the working class. Here again, the antilabor nitpickers make their slimy appearance. They agree there have been objective developments like new science and technology. But like a broken record they keep repeating, "the new technology has so changed production that the working class has ceased to exist."

It is true, there are technological changes

taking place in the kind of work workers perform. But this change in no way changes the basic essence of class exploitation or the class struggle.

On the U.S. class struggle scoreboard there have been innings lost, but mainly games won. The right to organize legal unions was a battle that lasted for 100 years. Labor lost many players and innings. But the game was finally won. The battleground was the shops and picket lines. And finally, in 1935, Roosevelt signed the victory into law.

In the founding years of the AFL there was a constitutional bar against racism. Affiliated unions had to remove all "color bars" before they were given an AFL charter.

However, after the rise of the big corporations they put tremendous class collaborationist pressures on the unions and the constitutional bar against racism was put on the shelf.

There were other restrictions. The corporations barred Black workers from learning skills and from entering apprentice programs. And state governments barred Afro-American workers from obtaining trade licenses.

The trade union leadership used these discriminatory practices to bar Black workers from the unions that were organized along craft lines. The craft unions were based on racist discrimination.

In 1902, based on a study, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois concluded that the AFL's policy regarding racism had "regressed." This report stated that 43 craft unions had no Black members and that one-half of the 40,000 in the unions were members of the coal miners' union.

Thus, the official union policy became total racial segregation and organizing Black workers into separate locals. This policy remained intact until the organizing drives of the CIO.

The trade union movement has traveled a long road from the total acceptance and practice of racial discrimination in the workplace and within the trade unions to an antiracist position at the AFL-CIO's 16th convention just a few months ago, which passed resolutions that called for adjustments in the seniority system in

order to ensure affirmative action; from picket lines in support of segregation and discriminatory practices to picket lines against the racist regime in South Africa.

Thus, while there are many miles to go on the road to full equality, the class struggle has made significant progress.

The convention resolutions also drew the necessary conclusions from the fact that over 50 per cent of U.S. women are now in the work force and nearly 50 per cent of the work force are women. Because of this, the issues and struggles for equal rights for women workers have become an integral feature of the class struggle.

Women workers are adding a new dimension to the class struggle, both in the rank and file, in leadership and on the shop floor.

The AFL-CIO convention also expressed a new sense of militancy reflecting the continuing explosion of strikes taking place across our land. The focus was sharply antimonopoly, antimultinational corporation. The anti-Reagan sentiment, especially on domestic issues, was strong and militant.

The convention expressed an even higher level of political independence and political action, especially aimed at the 1986 congressional elections.

The convention expressed a greater class consciousness, a greater class unity and international solidarity, as well as a marked decrease in anti-Communism.

The convention was the coming together of trends, patterns and a new direction that put forward the image of a U.S. multiracial, multinational, male-female, united working class marching to the forefront of all the major struggles and movements for social progress.

The new patterns and the new direction do not, in any way, change or moderate the class struggle. In fact, it is sharper, more on the surface and more focused on the class enemy.

The new challenge that the class struggle must take on is the deepening and widening crisis of everyday living: 30 million of our people live below the poverty level. At the height of an

economic upturn 20 million are unemployed. Five million people, many of them children, are homeless and hungry. Two hundred and fifty thousand farm families are evicted each year.

The working class and class struggle are deeply affected by the sharpening of and increase in racism across our land.

This is also changing the thought patterns of the working class and the essence and forms of the class struggle. These new thought patterns were all reflected in the 16th AFL-CIO convention.

While we recognize the rise in class consciousness and criticize its sometimes-slow development, we must also take note of the many factors in U.S. history that have slowed down the maturing of class consciousness, the many factors that often flattened the sharp peaks with valleys.

U.S. capitalism had the best of all conditions for its development and growth—rich in natural resources, a big supply of foreign labor and skills. And, in later years, the profits from foreign, imperialist exploitation. Add to this the racism, transferred from the slave market, that has been and continues to be a special source of superprofits and capital accumulation.

But these unique features have been slowly deteriorating, and with this deterioration the class struggle has sharpened. In turn, the sharpened class struggle has brought in its wake a growing class consciousness. The class struggle creates new material for the development of class consciousness.

But the human brain is not a clean sheet on which you can write whatever you like, as Mao Tse Tung once said. To make room for the new class struggle concepts it is necessary to remove some of the old, class collaborationist anti-working-class ideas that surround workers ideas that justify class exploitation. Workers are told every day in many ways that nothing can be done, that this is the way it is and the way it will always be.

Therefore, to help develop class consciousness it is necessary to simultaneously fight against wrong concepts and at the same time in-

ject new ideas to replace them. Such a process is a most important feature of class struggle.

And it is only the Communist Party that can bring to the working class a consciousness of itself as a class. It is the party of the working class. This is the main leadership the Communist Party gives the working class. It helps the working class to recognize the need for its own political party. It translates the experiences of workers into class conscious concepts. It helps to transform trade union consciousness into class and socialist consciousness.

This is an important aspect of May Day events. It is the process of replacing old ideology with new ideas that support and fortify the working class in its daily battles with the class enemy.

The class struggle will go through changes in form, but it will be around influencing events and the course of history so long as there are classes of exploiters and exploited, so long as there are two world socio-economic systems.

Those who ignore the centrality of the class struggle will not only lose their direction, but find themselves in the swamp of opportunism.

To ignore the centrality of the class struggle is to knowingly or unknowingly be on the side of monopoly capital.

Ideological clarity and firmness is possible only if it is rooted in a clear understanding of the class struggle. It forces one to take sides. One can not sit on the fence between two opposing classes in a class battle.

For example, taking the side of socialism in the world arena is taking the side of the working class—as one would support a strike struggle. A deeper understanding of the class struggle is necessary to have a deeper understanding of the role of the working class in history.

Such is the main lesson and meaning of 100 years of May Days, the Haymarket history and the class struggle.

This is where the science of Marxism-Leninism and the indispensable role of the Communist Party come onto the stage of history.

The Communist Party is itself a product of

the class struggle. Its roots are in the strike struggles, the unemployed marches, the organizing drives, the struggles against racism and for women's equality.

The Party is the most consistent force for class unity.

Marxism-Leninism makes it possible to understand the whole picture, not just passing scenes.

The Communist Party helps the working class to see where we have been, where we are, where we are going and how to get there.

On this 100th May Day we are very proud to announce that with the help of thousands of trade unionists, peace fighters and fighters for equality we are going to start the publication of a new, national daily paper that will be published simultaneously on both coasts, East and West.

Our new *People's Daily World* will give life to August Spies' prediction that "everywhere the flames will blaze." It will help fulfill Albert Parsons' defiant prophesy, "The voice you silence by strangling us here will grow into a powerful mighty voice heard the world over."

The new *People's Daily World* will be just such a flame, just such a voice.

The class struggle takes no time off. It will play its role to the very end. And when the working class leads the struggle that will finally put an end to the capitalist system of exploitation, when it retires the old capitalist class, as a final glorious act it will collectively proclaim its own end. For there will no longer be a need for workers to act as a class.

Ironic as it may seem, in the end the anti-labor nitpickers will be right—the class struggle will wither away, the working class will have fulfilled its historic role.

All the future May Days will celebrate the advances and achievements of communist society. Future May Days will pay tribute to the new victories of humanity in its total mastery over nature and the cosmos. □

International Working-Class Solidarity Yesterday and Today

YURI KRASIN

When in May 1886, a century ago, Chicago workers held a demonstration to campaign for an eight-hour working day, and the streets were stained with their blood, hardly anyone expected the event to go down in the history of the working-class movement as one that would launch a notable tradition of marking May 1 as the day of international solidarity of working people. But that is exactly what happened: on the American continent an internationalist tradition was created.

The bourgeoisie and its lackeys have gone out of their way to smash that tradition. Their efforts have ranged from overt reprisals to attempts to integrate May Day celebrations into a policy designed to promote class collaboration. All that has been in vain. Every May Day, workers are united by a determination to express their demands and their convictions through demonstrations and mass meetings.

What is the source of this mighty manifestation of proletarian solidarity? The answer is proletarian internationalism. The centenary of the May Day tradition prompts thoughts about the historical fate of proletarian internationalism, its traditions, prospects and role in solving the tasks that face the working-class movement in its struggle for peace and social progress.

It is common knowledge that the idea of the worldwide historic role of the working class as society's liberator from all forms of exploitation and from social and national oppression is fundamental to Marxism. There is nothing mystical about this idea. It is rooted in the social existence of the working class. By virtue of its position in the capitalist system of production, it is deprived of the means of production. Since the latter are owned and controlled by the capitalists, the working class becomes the object

of capitalist exploitation. That is why it has a stake in abolishing private ownership and establishing socialism, which institutes public ownership of the means of production and rules out the exploitation of man by man.

The working class's advance to the socialist ideal is barred by capital. Capital is an international force. Historical experience makes it clear to the proletariat that only class solidarity is a reliable guide in the struggle for their basic interests and rights and paves the way for the liberation of the working class. Already the earliest workers' political actions—the uprisings of the Lyon and Silesian weavers and the Chartist movement—brought the importance of class solidarity into sharp focus. It became especially obvious during the first socialist revolution—the Paris Commune of 1871—whose defeat was brought about by lack of solidarity.

The class struggle taught the working class the importance of political unity and organization. By drawing the lessons of class struggle, the founders of Marxism were able to formulate a program of political action for the working class and to translate it into life through the activity of the Communist League, the proletariat's first international organization, and then through the activity of the First International. The basic ideas of that class program were embodied in the activity of the workers' parties which emerged in a number of European countries.

Thus, by the mid-1880s the working-class movement had welded an immutable tradition of class solidarity. It was substantiated in the theory of Marxism, which formulated the laws governing the development of the working-class movement. It was embodied in its political organization and vigorously upheld and propagated by the workers' mass movement.

All this explains why the spark ignited by the Chicago May Day events of 1886 never died out. They brought to light a need generated by

Speech delivered by Yuri Krasin, vice-president of the Academy of Social Sciences of the USSR, at the PA Conference on the Centenary of May Day, March 15, 1986.

the development of the working-class movement, the need for class solidarity, which could not be contained within national boundaries and which therefore acquired an international character. One could say that the Chicago events of May 1886 were not so much a manifestation of the specific situation prevailing in the United States as a reflection of a pressing need of the international working-class movement. The Chicago events revealed the dialectics of the general and the particular, of the international and the national, in the unfolding of the working-class movement. That is why the Chicago May Day of 1886 had repercussions throughout the world and launched the tradition of marking May Day as the day of international solidarity of workers in all countries.

Significantly, the resolution on the international demonstration to be held on May 1 was adopted in 1889 by the Constituent Congress of the Second International. International unity—unity built on a class platform, at that—was essential for the international working-class movement. This was borne out by the description of the political goals of the working-class movement in the resolution adopted by the Paris Congress, “the liberation of labor and of all mankind can only be achieved by the proletariat which, organized as a class on an international scale, must gain political power with a view to expropriating capital and turning the means of production into public property.” This kind of ideological orientation prompted the Congress to adopt a resolution on an international May Day demonstration as a manifestation of class solidarity in the struggle for the vital interests of the working class. The ideas of class solidarity, born out of the practice of the working-class movement, gained ground. It is no accident that, commenting on the importance of the resolution on the May Day demonstration, Engels wrote, “This is the best of what has been achieved by our Congress” (Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 37, p. 266).

The first international demonstration proved that the need for it was really urgent. On May 1, 1890, the world was swept by workers’ actions. Thousands of people came out into the streets: Vienna and Barcelona were the sites

of 100,000-strong demonstrations; the mass meeting held in London’s Hyde Park was attended by 300,000 people. Workers regarded the May Day events as something that intimately concerned them. A year later, assessing the significance of the May Day events, Paul Lafargue wrote,

The first of May holds a special place in the people’s minds; I could see it wherever I went. Each of the workers who participated in a demonstration held that day, or who would have willingly participated in it but for the circumstances, albeit isolated in his environment, lost in his tiny community, is convinced that he acted at one with the workers all over the world.

Engels was quick to realize the importance of May Day, as witnessed by the fact that it was exactly on May 1, 1890, that he wrote a new preface to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The Preface reads,

Because today, as I write these lines, the European and American proletariat is reviewing its fighting forces, mobilized for the first time, mobilized as *one* army, under *one* flag, for *one* immediate aim: the standard eight-hour working day, to be established by legal enactment, as proclaimed by the Geneva Congress of the International in 1866, and again by the Paris Workers’ Congress in 1889. And today’s spectacle will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all countries to the fact that today the working men of all countries are united indeed.

If only Marx were still by my side to see this with his own eyes!

Engels regarded this mass manifestation of class solidarity as a mighty lifegiving force of proletarian internationalism.

The workers’ demonstrations of 1890 look modest indeed when measured by today’s standards. In their day, however, they were something impressive and unique, something that stirred up hundreds of thousands of working people. While the Paris Commune of 1871 was a flash of lightning that signalled the beginning of a new era in the development of the working-class movement, May Day of 1890 was vivid proof of the working class’s ability to close its ranks and to muster a mighty army of wage la-

bor on the eve of the impending class struggle against capitalist domination.

The establishment of the May Day tradition showed that the working-class movement had turned into a powerful factor of social progress and that it was imperative for it to systematically review its forces and manifest its class solidarity on an international scale.

On May Day the slogan, "Workers of all countries, unite!" is translated into life and becomes embodied in a political demonstration of the community of working people's class interests, which convinces them of the just nature of their struggle and its imminent victory.

The internationalist tradition of marking May Day quickly took root and developed in Russia. It was consonant with the state and needs of the working-class movement in the country.

In Russia, the late 1870s and early 1880s witnessed the transition from hand manufacture to the factory system. In the early 1890s, there were some 10 million wage workers in the country. In terms of the concentration of labor, Russia surpassed even the most developed capitalist countries. The strike movement attained an impressive scale. The working class became aware of its own might and potential. In 1877, the worker Pyotr Alexeyev said prophetically to his judges in the courtroom, "Millions of workers shall raise their muscular arms and the yoke of despotism supported by the soldiers' bayonets shall be smashed to smithereens."

In the mid-1870s, Russia saw the emergence of a number of workers' political unions. Their program-documents reveal the workers' awareness of the need for a revolutionary upheaval and international solidarity. For instance, the program of the North Russian Workers' Union, founded in 1876, read,

The great social struggle has already been launched; we must not sit back and wait. Our brothers in the West have already hoisted the banner of the liberation of millions; the only thing we ought to do is to join them. Hand in hand with them, we shall march forward and, uniting with our brothers, merge into a single formidable militant force.

It is hardly possible to put the idea of inter-

national proletarian solidarity more clearly.

In 1883, while abroad, Georgi Plekhanov organized a group known as the Emancipation of Labor. The group united some of the proponents of Marxist thinking in Russia. Numerous Marxist study groups and circles sprang up all over the country. Among them was M.I. Brusnev's group, which was set up in 1889 and united St. Petersburg Marxists.

In 1891 this group organized the first May Day meeting in Russia. There was no doubt that the workers who addressed the meeting with political speeches staunchly adhered to a class stand of proletarian solidarity. The worker F. Afanasyev stressed,

We should start with mustering an organized force of workers consciously seeking to improve their position; this force must be capable of making the government cede to it political rights, which would enable us to set about transforming the present economic order.

As the May Day meetings and demonstrations grew in scale the Russian proletariat's class awareness matured. Political leaflets distributed among the population spoke of class solidarity in ever more explicit terms. The May Day leaflet issued by the Moscow Workers' Union in 1895 read,

Our demands will be met when we become a force; and we shall turn into an effective force only when we start to act together, pooling our efforts, hand in hand with one another. Only then shall we be in a position to achieve our ends.

The political leaflet distributed on May 1, 1896, by the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, founded by Lenin, voiced solidarity with the working-class movement in other countries,

May the struggle waged by our brothers in other countries bring them, as soon as possible, to the desired victory, to the days when there will be neither masters, nor slaves, neither workers, nor capitalists, when everybody will work on an equal footing and have an equal opportunity to reasonably enjoy life.

The epoch of imperialism set in. The time of revolutionary battles was drawing nearer. In

Russia, the first year of the twentieth century was marked by an upsurge in the political sentiment that permeated May Day demonstrations. In 1901, the May Day meeting at the St. Petersburg Obukhovo factory culminated in a clash between the workers, on the one hand, and the police and tsarist troops, on the other (the event came to be known as the "Obukhovo defense"). The tsarist regime responded to the workers' mass political action by massive reprisals, by sending workers to prisons, convict camps and penal battalions. It should be noted that the upsurge in the political activity of the working class was brought about not only by the harsh economic situation, but also by the development of the workers' class consciousness. Speaking at his trial, the Obukhovo factory worker Gavrilov said that the May Day workers' action had been largely prompted by the revolutionary leaflets widely distributed at the factory.

The revolutionary social democrats had a great role to play in giving a new dimension to the May Day demonstrations and turning them into a form of conscious, revolutionary mass protest. Summing up the results of the 1901 May Day events in an article published in the newspaper *Iskra*, Lenin wrote,

It is time we set to work organizing the celebrations in as large a number of centers as possible, and on a scale as imposing as possible. They must be imposing, not only in the numbers of participants, but in the organized character and the class consciousness the participants will display, in their determination to launch a resolute struggle for the political liberation of the Russian people and, consequently, for a free opportunity for the class development of the proletariat and its open struggle for socialism. (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 357.)

The following figures show that the May Day actions quickly acquired a mass scale. In 1891, the only May Day meeting in Russia was the one held in St. Petersburg. In 1903, on the eve of the first Russian bourgeois democratic revolution, May Day mass demonstrations and meetings were held in 63 towns and cities.

The workers' May Day actions acquired the broadest scale in the years of the first Russian Revolution. In 1906 the May Day events in St.

Petersburg alone involved more than 100,000 people. In 1907, they involved 115,000. Significantly, in those years the May Day events in European countries were held under the slogan of international solidarity with the Russian Revolution. In protest against the French bankers' intention to grant a loan to the tsarist regime, which needed the money to suppress the revolution, May Day meetings and demonstrations in France were held under the slogan advanced by Jean Jaures, "Not a single sou to the tsar!" British workers raised funds which they wanted to be distributed among the families of the Russian workers killed during the revolution.

The defeat of the revolution did not signal an end to May Day workers' actions in Russia. On the eve of the First World War they were on the upswing again. During the war the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin, imparted an anti-war character to the workers' actions. The May Day leaflet issued by the St. Petersburg Russian Social Democratic Labor Party Committee in 1915 read,

To declare war on war, to launch a struggle against militarism and the capitalists' insatiable thirst for conquest that generates militarism—those are the tasks the Russian proletariat has put high on the agenda.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution modified the essence of the May Day celebrations in Soviet Russia. The working class's task of building a new society came to the fore. May Day of 1920 was proclaimed a national *subbotnik*. Millions of people did voluntary, unpaid work for the benefit of the nation. In the capital city alone, the *subbotnik* effort involved 500,000 people. Lenin was among them.

The reasons May Day acquired a new character were aptly explained by Mikhail Kalinin, then Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. He said,

This happened because the goal we now set for May Day is to contribute to combatting economic dislocation, restoring transport and other industries. Never before has the working class faced such problems; but we should be mindful of the fact that after the workers' and peasants' victory it has assumed the responsibility for industry. The Soviet proletariat is forever marching forward . . . This year, May Day will be

marked as a day of labor: all Russia's workers and peasants will turn the coming May Day into a holiday for the working people.

Since then, May Day in the Soviet Union has been a day to review the achievements of the working class and all working people in developing the economy, improving the well-being and social security of the working people, in consolidating Soviet statehood, in developing socialist democracy and culture and perfecting the socialist social system. In the Soviet Union, May Day is the national day of labor, the day to celebrate success in the effort to achieve new heights in socialist construction. At the same time, the Soviet people continue to regard May Day as the day of class solidarity with the struggle of the world's working people for their rights and freedoms, for the lofty goals of the international working-class movement.

The workers' May Day and proletarian internationalism are inseparable. This is a concept that provokes acute ideological debate. Even within the working-class movement, there are theorists who argue that proletarian internationalism has grown "obsolete," that it has become "narrow" and is experiencing a "crisis." They refer to the peculiarities of the historical period mankind is going through and to the ensuing new tasks and features of the working-class movement.

It stands to reason that proletarian internationalism does not remain unaffected by the swift and far-reaching changes sweeping the present-day world. However, its essence—class solidarity as the manifestation of the community of the basic interests of workers the world over—remains intact.

In what way does the development of the content and forms of proletarian internationalism manifest itself?

- It manifests itself in the development of the working class's joint effort: from isolated workers' actions at individual enterprises to the working people's solidarity displayed first on the national and then on the international scale, to the unity of action of all social forces opposed to the domestic and foreign policies pursued by the reactionary imperialist forces. Joint actions

of the working class and its allies, constantly growing in their scale and effect, impact on the dynamics of the balance of social/class forces, influencing the course of world development.

- It gave an impulse to the development of political forms of solidarity; from the early strike committees, it led to the establishment of trade unions, and then also to working-class political parties. Acting on the traditions shaped by the working-class movement, revolutionary parties of a new type sprang up in the imperialist era. International organizations of the working class, too, came into being. With the inception of the socialist world system, proletarian internationalism became a principle of relations between the independent and sovereign states of the socialist community, and assumed the form of socialist internationalism.

- It was reflected in the development of the political consciousness of the workers and other working people: from a spontaneous display of class principles in the psychology and ethics of the workers it led to an internationalist outlook and, later, a theoretical formulation of the tasks of the working-class movement. This formulation summed up international experience and provided the key to understanding the common objective laws governing the revolutionary process, and the correlation of the international and the national in that process. The emergence of an internationalist consciousness in the working-class movement was a complex and contradictory process accompanied by a clash of ideologies, elimination of the bourgeois way of thinking and of nationalist prejudices cultivated by the ruling classes in order to divide the working class and to subordinate it spiritually.

- It extended the sphere of action of proletarian internationalism. After the Great October Socialist Revolution, in recognition of the swift growth of the national liberation movement, the slogan of proletarian internationalism was extended as follows, "Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!" Today, the sphere of international solidarity of the forces taking part in the world's revolutionary renovation has expanded still more. The 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties advanced the following slogan: "Peoples of the

socialist countries, workers, democratic forces in the capitalist countries, newly liberated peoples and those who are oppressed, unite in a common struggle against imperialism, for peace, national liberation, social progress, democracy and socialism!" (*International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 39.)

- It prompted an internationalist reaction to the global problems of our time affecting the fundamental pillars of the life activity of mankind, the interests of various classes and social groups, of all countries and all peoples. This is paving the way for broad international cooperation in resolving the global problems of our time. Certainly, the heterogeneous public forces involved, as the experience of new social movements shows, are giving rise to complicated and diverse relations with the working class, the class that stands at the center of the present era. The growth of international solidarity in this sphere is anything but smooth, for it involves contradictions and a blending of incompatible, sometimes opposite, views and positions.

- It prompted the growth of new forms of unity and joint action by the Marxist-Leninist parties, the vanguard of the working class. The diversity of the world today affects the mutual relations of Communist and Workers' parties. Disparities appear in their assessment of problems, events and facts. And this is only natural.

Unity is not an ossified monolith but a flexible system of views and positions adopted by various parties, differing on concrete issues but linked by the common principles of revolutionary theory and working-class policy. Thanks to this, the differences can be overcome through friendly dialogue, practical united action, opposition to opportunism and Left doctrinairism, through patient and persevering struggle for the Marxist-Leninist pillars of the Communist movement. A democratic system of relations among revolutionary parties of the working class has taken shape and is being improved. It conforms with the principle of proletarian internationalism, which implies international class solidarity and the complete independence and equal rights of each party.

Yes, the international solidarity of the democratic progressive forces of today is unusually broad and transcends the solidarity of the working class and the Communist Parties of various countries. But this is no reason for saying that proletarian internationalism is too narrow and must give way to something else, something vague and indefinite. After all, proletarian internationalism has never been a barrier separating the working class and its party from other progressive forces. On the contrary, it has always been the axis for a broader solidarity of all the working people.

Today, too, the class character of proletarian internationalism in no way restricts the cooperation of the working class, of its organizations, with other social and political forces that hold a progressive view of the acute problems facing mankind. More, proletarian internationalism is the factor that cements a broader democratic solidarity, giving it stability and purpose.

The threat of a nuclear catastrophe is prompting united action by mankind's enormous powers of self-preservation. Such is the source of what may be described as universal human solidarity, which runs across all political and ideological distinctions. This constructive interaction on the scale of the whole planet for the survival of the human race is taking shape in a struggle of opposites. Imperialism's aggressive nature is at loggerheads with the imperative of our time, with peaceful coexistence. It generates militarist tendencies that feed imperial ambitions and lead to an adventuresome policy.

The massive antiwar movement, too, embraces forces which are unaware or only vaguely aware of the true source of the war danger, and which nurse illusions about the position of the aggressive elements, are contaminated with anti-Communist prejudices, and cling to the erroneous view of the "equal culpability of the two superpowers" for the state of world affairs. In these circumstances, the consistently internationalist position of the political forces representing the working class in dealing with the universal task is absolutely essential to buttress the capability of the antiwar movement as such, and to create and strengthen the poten-

tial of peace, reason and goodwill as a counterweight to imperialism's aggressive policy.

In our time, proletarian internationalism has gained a fundamentally new dimension: now, the historical mission of the working class is not confined to just liberating society from social oppression. It also centers on saving human civilization from a nuclear Armageddon. And certainly, when dealing with this objective, class solidarity does not mean counterposing a distinctive working-class platform to the broad antiwar movement, but requires active participation in it, promotion of that movement, with relying on the scientific theory of social development, showing the true causes of international tension, the sources of the danger to peace, and overcoming prejudices that hinder effective solidarity of all the peaceloving forces.

In this internationalist position we see the universal human striving to ensure the very right to life merge with the interests of the most advanced class to preserve the basis of social progress in the present contradictory but mutually-dependent world. The unity of the class factors with factors that are common to all humanity is an indication of the lofty humanism of proletarian internationalism. This humanism is expressed in the concept of an all-embracing system of international security, the military, political, economic and humanitarian bases defined by the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

In substance, the Congress advanced a program that constitutes an organic alloy of the philosophy of shaping a secure peace in the nuclear and space era with a platform of concrete actions that includes the proposals for a complete, phased elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. This program, which works in the interests of all humanity, is a counterweight to the sinister Star Wars project and sets an inspiring goal for international solidarity and fruitful cooperation among all the living forces of contemporary society.

May Day 1986 is a day of struggle for the implementation of the nuclear disarmament program as a tangible step closer to the ideal of socialism—a world without arms. Karl Marx noted once that the working class aspires to a society whose international rule will be Peace,

because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—Labor. (See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*.) The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 hoisted the banner of that society, the banner of Labor and Peace. Today, the idea of lasting peace has become a powerful stimulant of the international solidarity of the working people, of all progressive and democratic forces. It expresses the fundamental prerequisite for the contemporary development of society.

Proletarian internationalism is not just part of the struggle against oppression, but also an element in the building of a system of social relations that roots out the very possibility of exploitation and social inequality, and lays the foundation for an essentially new, free civilization ensuring the development of the creative potential of every person and society as a whole. The constructive work under way in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is profoundly internationalist in content and effect. The new edition of the Program of the CPSU stresses especially that the Party considers improving socialist society and advancing to communism a most important international task which accords with the interests of the socialist world system, the interests of the international working class and all humanity.

In its constructive endeavors, socialism encountered most intricate problems. Anti-Communists, who aim at discrediting the "socialist experiment," usually try to capitalize on these problems. To be sure, they say nothing of the incredible difficulties which the working class, the working people of Russia, have had to overcome. They speak of the "high price" of socialist reconstruction, as though there had been no two exhausting wars and none of the ensuing ravages and losses. Twenty million Soviet people, among them the flower of the rising generations, laid down their lives in fighting fascism during the Second World War. And think of the price paid in overcoming the economic and cultural backwardness inherited from tsarist days in the bid to make the country a modern industrial power. And this in a setting of continuous economic, political, military and psychological

imperialist pressure and the need for saving on everything in order to buttress defenses. At present, the imperialists make no secret of the fact that one of the aims of the new arms race spiral in outer space is to create unbearable economic tensions for the socialist countries and hinder attainment of constructive objectives.

In this difficult situation, the country carried out its task, unprecedented in scale and depth, of building a society free from the exploitation of man by man. And what, in essence, were the results?

Overcoming countless obstacles, rectifying mistakes, which are unavoidable in any new undertaking, the society that sprang from the October Revolution achieved results of worldwide historical significance. This was convincing proof that the socialist ideal was attainable. As Marx predicted, an association of free people working with commonly owned means of production, a society free from social-class antagonisms, consciously regulated, developing according to a scientifically grounded rational plan, emerged in the socialist land. All members of society have a guaranteed right to work and to the rewards of their work. Opportunities are offered, and ever more broadly used, for the active and conscious participation of the members of society in running the state and public affairs. A socialist way of life has taken shape, characterized by cooperation among people, collectivism, concern by society for all people, a full-blooded life and rich interests and aspirations for every individual. Those are the everlasting values of existing socialism, the main source of society's political stability, optimism and faith in the future. The contours of a new civilization are taking shape, showing that all problems which capitalism can not solve will be successfully solved on a collectivist basis.

Despite the stereotype of bourgeois propaganda, socialism is not a stagnant entity. It is a dynamic society which reacts to the challenges of our time, rising step after step towards higher stages of maturity. Today socialism has reached a qualitatively new frontier. The content of the tasks of this stage has been defined by the 27th Congress and the tasks themselves are listed in the new edition of the Party Program. The scale

and depth of the forthcoming changes are so significant that it is possible to talk not simply about the quantitative growth, evolution, but about revolutionary changes.

What is at the core of the strategy worked out by the CPSU? It amounts to accelerating the country's socio-economic development. This implies enhanced rates of economic growth. But that is not all. A new quality of growth must be achieved. This means a switchover to the intensive type of economic development based on scientific and technological progress, a switchover to a structural reorganization of the economy, of the entire economic mechanism, and the shaping of an integral, effective and flexible system of management.

What are the indicators of this reconstruction? By the end of the century the national income will nearly double. Industrial output will double, too, and the productivity of labor will rise 150 per cent.

Acceleration is not a purely economic objective. It is a social, political, cultural and ideological objective as well. The acceleration of socio-economic progress calls for an enlivening of the human factor in production. Within the system of relations based on socialist property, every working person must be more fully aware that he or she is co-owner and co-manager of the means of production and the results of production. This can not be achieved by economic means alone. The working people must be drawn into management, into implementing a broad social program making for consistent realization of the principles of social justice.

In the years to come, socialist democracy, that is, socialist self-government by the people, is to make further headway. Socialism, its adversaries say, sets a limit to democracy. The picture of socialist democracy and its long-term development, as presented in the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the Party, refutes this claim. The greater role to be played by the Soviets, the resolute fight against bureaucracy, vitalization of the mass organizations, the trade unions and work collectives, broader publicity, the development of various forms of direct democracy, and an in-depth extension of the rights and freedoms of

the individual—all these are essential levers for the acceleration of Soviet society's socio-economic development.

Naturally, the strategy of acceleration presupposes higher standards of political culture, political consciousness and civic responsibility among all members of society. All this is tied up with the all-around development of the abilities and talents of the individual. Socialist society is making visible progress towards the great aim formulated by the founders of Marxism and reproduced in the new edition of the CPSU Program: the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

In short, the 27th Congress of the CPSU marks the important turning point in the development of Soviet society. Criticizing itself, shaking off all outdated elements and displaying its flair for innovation, socialist society is in constant motion, in a creative search for the optimum solutions of vital problems. The aim of this motion is to pass to a qualitatively new state of society, giving greater scope to the advantages of socialism and to its force of attraction.

The program of construction charted by the 27th Congress of the CPSU refutes accusations that the intention of the Soviet Union is to "export" revolution. Marxists hold that any revolutionary reconstruction of society occurs through the free choice of each nation of its own way of development. This choice is determined by internal needs and conditions, and flows from the contradictions of internal development. If there are any obstacles to such free choice, experience shows that they are created by none other than imperialism.

Certainly, the working people of socialist countries do not conceal their sympathy for the struggle of progressives in capitalist countries. But, as Lenin stressed, the main influence on the world's social progress is exerted by socialism, above all through its economic policy. The working class, all people in the Soviet Union, are taking an active part in the world's revolu-

tionary renewal by building the new society.

The acceleration of the Soviet Union's socio-economic development is a revolutionary task of international importance. It will prove the superiority of the socialist system, will add to its international prestige, and help other nations to understand their perspective and to make the correct choice. This will strengthen socialism as a factor of peace, and will restrict the capability of imperialist reaction to interfere in the internal affairs of other peoples. Socialism, the new edition of the CPSU Program says, proves its superiority not by force of arms but by force of example in every area of the life of society, by the dynamic development of the economy, science and culture, by improvements in the living standards of working people, and by a deepening of socialist democracy. The program for the development of socialist society in the USSR up to the end of the twentieth century is a program of peace and social progress. As Mikhail Gorbachev said at the 27th Congress of the CPSU,

the aim of our social and, I would add, vital strategy consists in that the people should cherish our planet, the skies above, and outer space, exploring it as the pioneers of a *peaceful* civilization, ridding life of nuclear nightmares and completely releasing all the finest qualities of Mankind, that unique inhabitant of the Universe, for constructive efforts only.

That, indeed constitutes the profound internationalism of the program of Lenin's party.

It is a hundred years since May Day 1886. The world has changed cardinally since then. Humanity has entered the era of transition from capitalism to socialism. The international solidarity of the working class, of all working people, has grown stronger. It has become a powerful factor of unity for all those who aspire to peace and social progress. May Day is the symbol of that vital solidarity on which the destiny of the human race, its future, depends. □

May Day's Centenary — A Portent

JOHN PITTMAN

May 1, 1986, is the centenary of a history-making working-class victory. In the class war with the exploiters, this victory enabled workers to determine the limits of their work day.

"On May 1," wrote Gus Hall, general secretary of the Communist Party, USA,

hundreds of millions of workers bask in the sunlit grandeur of the achievements, the victories and the historic role of our class. It is the day when class consciousness is on display . . . May Day's roots are in the class consciousness of workers—in the history, the experiences, the memories handed down through generations, the treasured traditions and pride in their historic role . . . The roots of May Day belong to every worker. They are forever a part of the past, present and future of the working class.¹

The path traversed during those one hundred years, the lessons imparted, and the contours ahead can be seen from the overview which this centenary evokes.

The victory of May 1, 1886, as Karl Marx had foreseen, was the outcome of "centuries of struggle between capitalist and laborer."² In his study of the work day, Marx had concluded that

in the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working day presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labor, i.e., the working class.³

The victory proved to be a bridgehead, a strong point from which the workers were able to launch further struggles for working and living conditions. So powerful was the movement for a shorter work day, so compelling the ideas which inspired it, that it rapidly spread from country to country.

Yet, there was more to this swift expansion than the benefits that fewer working hours would bring—longer life, more time for rest,

recreation and self-development. There was another potent force behind it, the force of the international solidarity of the working class of many countries.

Karl Marx closely followed the development of the struggle for a shorter workday being waged by workers in the United States. In his instructions to the delegates of the provisional London Council of the International Workingmen's Association who had been elected to attend the IWA's first congress in Geneva on September 3-8, 1866, Marx proposed adoption of the following resolution

A preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive, is the limitation of the work day. It is needed to restore the health and physical energies of the working class, that is, the great body of every nation, as well as to secure them the possibility of intellectual development, sociable intercourse, social and political action.

We propose eight hours work as the legal limit of the working day. This limitation is being generally claimed by the workmen of the United States of America. The vote of the Congress will raise it to the common platform of the working classes all over the world.⁴

At Geneva, the First International's Congress, acting in accordance with Marx's proposal, adopted a resolution for reducing the workday.

Several days earlier, in Baltimore, the founding convention of the National Labor Union had declared that

the first and great necessity of the present to free the labor of this country from capitalist slavery is the passing of a law by which eight hours shall be the normal working day in all states of the American Union.⁵

These virtually simultaneous actions meant that the 8-hour day movement had developed force on both sides of the Atlantic and they

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proved the internationalist origins of May Day.

Then, in ever-increasing strike struggles, the movement gained the momentum which culminated in the victory of May 1, 1886. Three years later, in July 1889, the Paris Congress of the Second International adopted a decision to observe May 1 every year in celebration of the 1886 victory and rededication to struggle for the principles it had given lasting significance.

The following year, 1890, witnessed the beginning of May First's annual observance. Annual May Day celebrations were begun in 1890 in Austria-Hungary, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Russia and the USA. In the Russian Empire, during that year, 10,000 workers in Warsaw staged a May Day strike. In 1892-1894 some 10,000 workers observed May Day in St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Nizhny Novgorod, Lodz, Vilnius, Tula, Kiev and Kazan.⁶

For the May 1, 1901, observances in Russia, the newspaper *Iskra*, at the direction of V.I. Lenin, issued a proclamation of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party. That year, for the first time, the workers' May First actions promulgated the slogan: "Down with autocracy!" They assumed, also, an all-Russia character, and clashes with armed troops occurred.

The May First celebrations in 1905 took place in 177 cities and industrial settlements, and involved peasants, soldiers and sailors as well as workers. When czarist troops shot down miners at the Lena goldfields in 1912, 400,000 workers demonstrated on May 1, demanding the eight-hour day, confiscation of landlords' lands, and an end to tsarist autocracy.⁷

The October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 transformed May First observances everywhere, imbuing them with a revolutionary content. Henceforth, May Day demonstrations became more massive and militant, and increasingly sounded anticapitalist slogans.

A sizeable increase in the number of nations where workers celebrate May First followed the defeat of the fascist-militarist powers in the Second World War. This victory resulted in the liberation of a number of states by the Soviet armed forces in conjunction with the forces

of the anti-fascist resistance. It led to the formation of the world socialist system, another incomparable triumph of the working class and proletarian internationalism.

Shortly thereafter the system of colonialist oppression, which freedom struggles had critically weakened before and during the Second World War, rapidly disintegrated and gave way to dozens of politically independent states.

These developments increased the number of May Day observances, bringing them nearer the goal of universality. The numerical gain and the geographical and political differentiation of the countries of the postwar world were accompanied by a differentiation in the goals and slogans of May Day observances.

In the socialist countries May Day celebrations are mobilizations of the working people for the construction of socialism and strengthening the socialist way of life. They honor international solidarity of working people, express solidarity with the struggles of people in the strongholds of capitalism and support the struggles against neocolonialist oppression in the developing countries.

In these, May First observances are mobilizations for securing independence, for liberation from neocolonialist fetters and for overcoming the backwardness deepened and perpetuated by neocolonialism. In the developed capitalist countries, May First observances project the aims of improving living and working conditions of the workers, defending their trade unions and other organizations, of preserving and securing their democratic rights, and of radical and socialist transformations.

Notwithstanding their diversity of content and form, May Day celebrations express a number of constant, universal features. They remain, first and foremost, true to their origin in the unity and solidarity of workers of all lands. At the turn of the century another demand of the workers was to become a permanent feature of the May First observances. As monopoly capital consolidated its rule and took the path of imperialist expansion, May First observances tended more and more to call for struggle against militarization and the war danger.⁸

Several congresses of the Second International discussed means of combatting militarism and preventing war. The Second International's congresses, from Zurich (1893) to Basle (1912) bound all socialists to combat war preparations and ideology, under all conditions, and to use the crisis created by a war for speeding the end of capitalism through social transformations.⁹

However, leaders of the Second International, particularly the Germans and Austrians, failed to carry out the policies they had voted for. Their opportunism and class collaborationist practices freed the hands of the imperialists, who exacted a heavy price from the workers—the First World War's toll of ten million killed, twenty million and more wounded and heavy destruction of Europe's industry. The working class and working-class internationalism was dealt a heavy blow.

However, in Russia, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, routed opportunism. In 1914 half a million workers staged strikes. Following the February 1917 Revolution, May First was observed openly and freely for the first time. Millions of workers demonstrated in the streets with the Bolshevik slogans: "All Power to the Soviets!" and "Down with Imperialist War!"¹⁰

The October Socialist Revolution and Soviet power's first decree, the decree on peace, were a gigantic step toward ending the war and rebuilding the unity of the workers on principles of internationalism.

In 1935, when all peoples again faced grave peril from rampaging imperialism's shock-force of bestial fascism and insatiable militarism, the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International extended the working-class principle of unity against the exploiters to unifying all opponents of war and fascism, irrespective of class, nationality and race.

The Seventh Congress sought to prevent the outbreak of war by expanding the working-class policy of alliances to united and peoples' fronts. Although the peace objective was not attained, the Seventh Congress's initiatives and activities helped prepare the political and ideological conditions for the subsequent defeat of fascism.

Moreover, they laid the foundations for postwar efforts to consolidate the international solidarity of forces struggling for security, democratic transformations, national liberation and socialism.

As the end of the Second World War approached, international organizations emerged to institutionalize the unity and cooperation of these forces. Among them are the World Federation of Trade Unions, today uniting 89 labor organizations of 80 countries, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the World Peace Council.

There are numerous regional, national and local public organizations as well as working-class associations which incorporate in their programs or constitutions internationalist principles conforming to those of the working class. The UN Charter, adopted in June 26, 1945, commits its members, now 159, "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."¹¹

Such was the origin and development, in brief, of May First's 100 years of celebrating victories won by the working class through unity and solidarity. The overview of May First's centenary spotlights the growth of proletarian internationalism in content and depth. It points to the increasing influence of internationalism in freeing humankind from the fetters of moribund social relations and furthering its progress in the creation of a classless world, a fit abode for the developing new civilization.

May Day's significance and development are relevant today, during these last years of the twentieth century, particularly for workers in the strongholds of capitalism and for the newly emerging states of the developing world. For the workers of these countries, the struggles of the U.S. working class which generated the events giving birth to May Day have pertinent, practical implications.

Quite early after the American Revolution, the workers of the USA confronted the problem

of unity in the struggle against the exploiting classes.

Contrary to the illusion of a paradise for workers in the New World, which drew millions of European immigrants, there was considerable class polarization between the propertied and the propertyless. The exploitation of immigrant laborers, mechanics and artisans, and of women and children, was exceeded in brutality and severity only by exploitation of African slaves.¹²

Capitalism's cyclic crises of overproduction struck painful blows at the working people from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The crises of 1819, 1837, 1854, 1857, 1860 and 1873 worsened living and working conditions, made united struggle of the workers mandatory for their survival. Increased wages and fewer hours in the workday were the demands of these struggles.¹³

The first strike by workers for a shorter work week was that of Philadelphia carpenters in 1791. This was followed in 1825 by a series of strikes by Boston carpenters. The ten years after 1825 witnessed a rapid spread of the shorter work week movement.

In that period, workers fought to reduce the workday from 12, 14 and even 16 hours. Most of these strikes failed to win any gains. The failures made clear to the workers the imperative need for unity, for a common front against the employers.

Thus began the sequence of unifying activities: first, among the workers of a single trade in a single enterprise. It spread to the workers of that trade in other enterprises, to workers of many trades in one enterprise, then to all the workers in an extended area. It was a gradual, sometimes rapid, expansion from a local union to a citywide union, then to state and regional organizations, and lastly to a national body. The 10-hour workday movement had brought about a general reduction of hours by mid-century, although until 1865 the 13-hour day prevailed.¹⁴

By November 1865, organization of the working class had begun to recover from the setbacks experienced in the Civil War. A weekly prolabor paper estimated there were already

nearly 300 local trade unions in 61 different trades. During the 1850s, national organizations of workers had begun to take shape, presaging the formation of a national labor federation.

In the Civil War years, agitation for the 8-hour work day was sparse and sporadic. It had been on the increase during the 1850s, when the workers in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and national unions of machinists, blacksmiths and molders expressed demands for adoption of an 8-hour day. During the war, it subsided, but in the years following it became a unifying force.

"Eight-hour Leagues were established all over the country," a trade union account reports:

In California alone there would be more than fifty by 1868. Even farmers were joining Grand Eight-Hour Leagues; state organizations working for the reform had already been established in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Iowa, while all the unions in New York City were represented in the Central Eight-Hour League formed there in 1866. Such was the massive organized strength behind the measure that, in 1868, the federal government passed an eight-hour law for workers employed by it. Six states also enacted legislation providing for the eight-hour day.¹⁵

The action that triggered the great strikes on May 1, 1886, which established that day in the annals of working-class achievement, was taken by the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada at its 1884 convention. Two resolutions adopted by the organization (which changed its name in 1886 to the American Federation of Labor) proposed establishment of two labor holidays, one on the first Monday in September—Labor Day—and the other to inaugurate the institution of the 8-hour work day on May 1, 1886.

The bourgeoisie and their media branded the call for the 8-hour workday as a Communist plot and an attempt to install a replica of the Paris Commune of 1871 in the United States. But the Federation's 1885 convention repeated its call to workers to act, first by negotiation with the employers, and failing favorable results, by strike action.

It is estimated that, on May 1, 1886, approx-

imately 350,000 workers in 11,562 establishments struck for the 8-hour day. Every industrial center in the country was affected. But the events in Chicago, where most of the industries were paralyzed, accounted for that city's rightful claim as the birthplace of May Day.

May 1, 1886, was a sunny, windless day, a Saturday and a workday of 12 to 14 hours. Sixty-two thousand Chicago workers pledged to march, and 80,000 assembled with their families. There were also armed police, squads of hired thugs, assassins and provocateurs of the Pinkerton strikebreaking agency, and some 1,350 members of the National Guard with Gatling guns. The stage was set for a bloody confrontation.

However, the police and waiting thugs, the Pinkerton strikebreakers and the National Guardsmen, found no pretext to evoke "law and order." The marchers proceeded without incident and the demonstration ended at a celebration in a park.

Then, three days later, an event occurred which aroused the workers. It was act of revenge by the ruling exploiters. At a workers' meeting in Chicago's Haymarket Square, leaders of the 8-hour movement were protesting a shocking instance of police terror on the previous day. Four locked-out workers had been killed and many wounded outside the farm machine factory owned by the Copperhead magnate, Cyrus McCormick. Speakers at this Haymarket protest meeting had been leaders of the 8-hour movement. They were accordingly singled out for retribution, as examples to deter the workers' struggle.

Shortly before the meeting in Haymarket Square ended it was attacked by a detachment of police. At this point, an agent provocateur threw a bomb into the police ranks, killing several and wounding many. The police reprisals were swift and sweeping. Hundreds were arrested and eight of the speakers were seized as perpetrators of the bombing. Then followed a travesty of a trial before a labor-hating judge in a lynch atmosphere. Seven of the eight were sentenced to death, one to life imprisonment. On

November 11, 1887, four were hanged.

After worldwide protests and demands for their freedom, the survivors were freed by a liberal governor who branded the trial, conviction and sentences a frameup.

Thus, the Haymarket Martyrs enter the pages of U.S. labor's history as symbols of the heroism of the workers who died in the struggle for a shorter work day.¹⁶

Summarizing the immediate tangible results of the May Day victory, labor historian Foner wrote:

... 185,000 out of 350,000 workers who struck for the eight-hour day gained their demand on May 1 and the days following. Moreover, the eight-hour agitation was mainly responsible for reducing the daily working time, for no less than 200,000 workers, from 12 or more to ten and nine hours per day. . . . In many places the Saturday half-holiday was adopted; there was an extensive movement for the early closing of stores, and the practice of Sunday labor was on its way out in most industries. . . . The struggle for the eight-hour day led thousands of workers to affiliate with organizations of labor. It was a mighty organizing weapon.¹⁷

However, besides unifying workers all over the country around a single vital issue and thereby facilitating their organization, the struggle for a workday of fewer hours advanced the maturing of the working class. It dispelled certain utopian and naive notions about class struggle realities. It revitalized a number of essential truths which have a universal significance for workers in the capitalist and developing countries.

In the course of the century-long struggle for a shorter day, U.S. workers accumulated experiences that are relevant today.

The exploiters' use of police, hired thugs, strikebreakers, labor spies and strikebreaking agencies, the National Guard, and even federal troops, was a common occurrence during the struggles for a shorter work week. Methods have changed and the tactics of strikebreaking and unionbusting are masterminded today by numerous corporations engaged in this specific "business." The direct use of force has been

lessened in the strongholds of capitalism, but fascist and authoritarian regimes continue it.

Today's working-class struggles center on alleviating unemployment, which has become a scourge comparable to the great plagues of old. The shorter workday is again being advanced by trade unions internationally. This was shown by the strikes in the West German metal-working and printing industries, where the workers demanded the 35-hour week with no reduction in pay. In the United States a number of trade unions have demanded the six-hour day with no cut in pay.

Moreover, the trade unions are participating more and more in political struggles to counter the onslaught on their living and working standards by "conservative" and "neoconservative" governments.

Early in the struggles for a shorter workday, workers discovered their efforts to build unity required activity among strata formerly excluded. Experience dictated the need to extend the struggle for unity to all workers, irrespective of race or ethnic group, color, sex or religious difference. The exploiters' policy was to perpetuate chauvinist and racist attitudes based on such differences. Capitalism had created both a racist and a sexist division of labor which operated to divide the workers, drag down their wages and defeat their struggles. These imposed divisions of labor are a source of multibillion-dollar superprofits for the exploiting classes. They retard the growth of class consciousness and the process of unification.

Karl Marx emphasized this link between the advance of the working class and its inclusion of all workers regardless of skin color. He wrote:

In the United States of North America every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor can not emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose.¹⁸

In 1869, Marx's thesis was elaborated by Isaac Myers, one of nine Afro-American delegates to the convention of the National Labor

Union. Congratulating the delegates on their invitation to colored and female workers to join the Union, Myers said:

Slavery or slave labor, the main cause of the degradation of white labor, is no more. And it is the proud boast of my life that the slave himself had a large share in the work of striking off the fetters that bound him by the ankle while the other end bound you by the neck.¹⁹

Marx was equally explicit on the necessity of emancipating female labor, whose oppression and exploitation had been a mainstay of patriarchal relations between the sexes for centuries. He congratulated the National Labor Union, which voted for equal pay for equal work at its 1868 convention—the first time in U.S. labor history.

He wrote:

Great progress was evident in the last congress of the American labor union, in that, among other things, it treated working women with complete equality. While in this respect the English, and the still more gallant French, are burdened with a spirit of narrow-mindedness. Anybody knows, if he knows anything about history, that great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex.²⁰

Notwithstanding the much greater participation today of women in the workforce and trade unions of the capitalist and developing countries, gross inequality between the sexes persists in the production process and in other social relations. The same is true for conditions of white and non-white workers in multiracial countries. The struggles to eliminate these conditions and establish equality remains a priority task of the working class, a prime condition for the preservation and strengthening of their democratic rights.

The earliest organizations of workers in the USA recognized the need of laboring people to utilize their right to vote to elect representatives who would serve them and enact legislation to advance their interests. In the 1830s there was a flurry of independent political activity and the

creation of political parties. In the course of their struggles the workers realized that trade union activities alone could not defend their unions and interests against the recurrent offensives of the exploiters to lengthen their working day, decrease their wages and permanently worsen their living and working conditions. Nor was any real advance to be made by attaching themselves to the political parties controlled by the capitalists.

In the USA, after the eight-hour strikes and victory in 1886, the exploiters responded with a massive offensive against labor. One response of the workers was a turn to political action. An attempt to elect a workers' candidate in the New York mayoral election by a newly established labor party was defeated. However, the comment of Frederick Engels was prophetic:

The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the constitution of the workers as an independent political party . . . The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and they can have the opportunity only when they have a movement of their own—no matter in what form so long as it is *their own movement*—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn through their mistakes.

There were to be many attempts at independent political action and the organization of political parties by U.S. workers. The exploiters countered by using opportunist leaders to turn these trials into failures and to maintain their grip on the political process.

Today the U.S. trade union movement has begun to repudiate some errors of the past. Its internationalist consciousness and activities have sharply increased. The efforts of the First International, which spread its ideas from its headquarters in New York during the last four years of its twelve years, were not exerted in vain. They are reflected today in the great upsurge of the movement for peace, for the prevention of a nuclear war, for an end to interference and intervention in the affairs of other countries, for activities of solidarity with

the victims of imperialism in general and U.S. imperialism in particular.

The growing role of workers, worldwide, in the determination of foreign policy is one of the most important and meaningful manifestations of the May Day tradition. No greater actions of international solidarity exist nowadays than those which would save humankind from nuclear incineration. This expresses May Day's significance in its centenary observance.

Notes

- 1 Gus Hall, *Basics*, International Publishers, New York, 1980, pp. 226, 230.
- 2 Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1, International Publishers, New York, p. 257.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 225.
- 4 Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, Vol. 2, p. 79.
- 5 Richard O. Boyer & Herbert Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), New York, 1970, p. 32.
- 6 *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 19, Moscow, 1975, pp. 359-360.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* Vol. 2, International Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 435.
- 9 *A Short History of the World*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 516.
- 10 *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, op. cit.
- 11 *Everyone's United Nations*, United Nations, New York, 1979, p. 382.
- 12 Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1983, pp. 11-15, 28-38.
- 13 For the conditions and struggles of the U.S. working class and working people, this article is based on materials in Foner's *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 1, 1947, and Vol. 2, 1955, International Publishers, New York; Anthony Bimba's *The History of the American Working Class*, International Publishers, New York, 1937; and *Labor's Untold Story*, Boyer & Morais, op. cit.
- 14 Foner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 218.
- 15 Bimba, op. cit. p. 144.
- 16 Boyer & Morais, op. cit., p. 32.
- 17 Foner, Vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 93-104.
- 18 *Capital*, op. cit., p. 284.
- 19 Boyer & Morais, op. cit., p. 36.
- 20 Marx & Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*, p. 255. Quoted in Foner, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 385.

May Day: From the 1960s to The Eve of the Centennial

PHILIP S. FONER

In 1960 and 1961 the New York May Day Committee was still denied the use of Union Square for May Day; the Square continued to be used by the Fourteenth Street Businessmen's Association for "Union Square USA." In 1961, the Labor and People's May Day Committee was compelled to use Washington Square on May Day, but was denied a permit for loudspeakers on the grounds that they would interfere with classes at New York University. Nevertheless, 2,500 rallied in Washington Square and called for "Peace, Jobs, Equality."

With the decline of McCarthyism, the rise of struggle in the U.S. and the development of detente between the United States and the Soviet Union, the situation began to change. In 1962 the May Day Committee for Defense of the Bill of Rights did obtain the use of Union Square. Gus Hall, general secretary of the Communist Party USA, free on \$10,000 bail for refusing to register under the notoriously vicious McCarran-Wood Act, was the main speaker. He told the gathering that "in spite of harassment through the years . . . May Day lives and lives well as a symbol of the unity and oneness of the common man throughout the world."¹

The 1963 May Day rally was once again at Union Square, this time featuring the slogans, "Hands off Cuba!" and "End Segregation" and hailing Pope John XXIII's recent peace encyclical. But the *New York Times* emphasized only "the mild character of the rally," noting that "the program included the singing of the 'Star Spangled Banner,' folk songs, and addresses by college students."²

May Day was a powerful force during the early 1960s in the struggle against the dictatorship of Antonio de Olvara Salazar in Portugal. In 1962 and 1963, despite the govern-

ment ban on May Day demonstrations, the illegal Communist Party called rallies in Lisbon and Oporto. The police responded by hosing people with blue-tinted water from municipal water cans. The sprayed water marked them as demonstrators so that the police could pick them up later.³ But thousands of Portuguese engaged in a three-hour battle with the troops and the police, many chanting *A Bastilla* (To the Bastille). One demonstrator was killed, but this did not stop the demonstrators from calling upon the workers to protest against the rising cost of living and the "senseless war" in Angola. Thus the May Day demonstration was converted into "a main test of political strength against the Salazar regime."⁴

U.S. OUT OF VIETNAM

In 1964, May Day in many countries was dedicated to ending U.S. involvement in Vietnam. At the Union Square rally in New York, Arnold Johnson, speaking for the Communist Party, called for "an end to the filthy war with Vietnam."⁵ Condemnation of U.S. intervention in Vietnam overshadowed all other issues on Japan's 1965 May Day. In West Berlin, demonstrators on May 1 shouted "Leave Vietnam" as greetings from U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson were read to the rally in Tiergarten. The demonstrators' placards read: "End the Dirty War in Vietnam! U.S. Out of Vietnam!"⁶

In his May Day address in Warsaw on May 1, 1965, Wladyslaw Gomulka charged the United States with having "become the policeman of colonialism" through its policies in Vietnam. He denounced the U.S. for trying "with the aid of bombs, napalm and gas to break the spirit of freedom and independence in Vietnam, and force it to its knees." The Warsaw meeting declared, "We demand an immediate end to the barbarian bombing raids of the Amer-

Excerpted from Philip S. Foner, *May Day, A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday 1886-1986*, International Publishers, New York, 1986.

icans in Vietnam, a stop to the daily barbarism of the United States against the Vietnamese nation and the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam."⁷

In Hull, England, Prime Minister Wilson was heckled when he spoke to the 1965 May Day rally and said with reference to Vietnam: "There is now, after months of anxiety and worry, a little light at the end of the tunnel." The demonstrators responded by calling for the United States to withdraw immediately from South Vietnam.⁸

Banners carried in the May Day 1966 parade in Moscow read: "Vietnam Will Triumph" and "Bring U.S. Murderers in Vietnam to Account." In his May Day speech, Marshal Malinovsky declared, "Together with the other socialist countries we will support our Vietnamese brothers, and we are giving them and will continue to give them all possible assistance to help them defeat the foul bandit war of the United States against the heroic Vietnamese people."

On May 1, 1966, 5,000 Vietnamese in Saigon staged an anti-American demonstration about 200 yards from the U.S. Embassy. They carried posters printed in English and Vietnamese reading, "Stop the War of Race Extermination in Vietnam!", "No More Bombs!", "Americans Go Home!" A speaker demanded that the U.S. end its involvement in Vietnam, and he appealed to workers in the United States not to make any more chemical defoliants to kill crops in Vietnam. A letter was then handed to correspondents addressed to American workers, urging them to play an active role in the antiwar movement in the United States. Before it ended, the meeting adopted resolutions calling for restoration of full civil liberties, including political activity, without restrictions; freedom of movement throughout the country; an end to press censorship and to the military draft; reducing the curfew; lower the cost of living; increased salaries for all workers, soldiers and civil servants, and the right of unions to strike without permission.⁹

In 1966, the first postwar mass May Day celebration in Canada was organized in Montreal by the *Comité de coordination de mouve-*

ments de gauche, set up under the cooperation of the Communist Party of Quebec and the Socialist Party of Quebec. Speakers representing the Confederation of National Trade Unions and the Quebec Federation of Labor addressed the rally, along with speakers from the Communist and the Socialist Parties and their affiliated groups. Mass parades organized by the trade unions of Quebec took place on several May Days in the 1970s.¹⁰

May Day floats in Moscow in 1967 carried signs reading: "We Are With You, Vietnam!", "U.S. Get Out of Vietnam!", "End U.S. Aggression!" In New York's Union Square, speakers at the May Day rally called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam and an end to the draft. "Bring the Boys Home Alive!", "Get Out of Vietnam Now!" were the most frequent slogans on the signs carried by the demonstrators. The crowd cheered as some young men burned draft cards and chanted, "Hell, No! We Won't Go!"¹¹

During the 1968 uprising of college and university students in the United States, there was more cooperation between the students and the May Day demonstrators. At the Union Square May Day rally, two Columbia University students appealed to the crowd "to support opposition to the university policies. They passed a tin can around the crowd to raise funds for a student strike against Columbia."¹²

In London, trade unionists and students marched together in the May Day parade. At the head of the marchers a trade unionist chanted, "May Day Is a Workers' Day." The students chanted slogans denouncing Enoch Powell, the racist member of Parliament who had sponsored new laws against immigrants from the West Indies and Asian countries. A group of Powell supporters, alleged to be dock workers, surged through a cordon of police to attack the anti-Powell students. But the other demonstrators came to the support of the students.¹³

President Ho Chi Minh was present at the 1968 May Day demonstration in Hanoi, but the May Day speech was delivered by Hoang Quoc Viet, president of the trade unions of North Vietnam. He charged that President Johnson's

limited bombing order of March 31 was "a perfidious trick to soothe progressive opinion in the United States and the world." The following May Day, Premier Phan Van Dong (successor to Ho Chi Minh) delivered the May Day address. He declared, "Although they are very reactionary and obdurate, the United States imperialists know that they have been defeated, and are being defeated, and will surely sustain increasingly heavy defeats." He urged the United States to let "the Vietnamese people in both zones settle the problem of peaceful unification of Vietnam in accordance with their aspirations without foreign intervention."¹⁴

The liberation of Saigon by North Vietnam in 1975 ended the Vietnam War. The defeat of the United States was the dominant theme of many May Day demonstrations—in Moscow, Peking, Warsaw, Berlin, Sofia, Budapest, New York, London and other cities. In Paris, May Day demonstrators carried portraits of Ho Chi Minh. In Moscow, Tass voiced the May Day prediction that sooner or later Chile's Right-wing junta, the militarist Israeli leadership and racist South Africa would join the overthrown Saigon regime on "the rubbish dump of history."¹⁵

MAY DAY IN LATIN AMERICA

On April 26, 1961, following the defeat of the U.S.-trained and supported counterrevolutionaries at the Bay of Pigs, Fidel Castro decreed that Cuba would be a "socialist state." About 500,000 Cubans demonstrated in Havana on May Day against the "imperialist United States" and shouted approval of the new socialist society in Cuba. Marchers carried slogans reading: "Viva socialism, which terminates all exploiters"; "Down with Yankee imperialism!"; "*Patria or Muerte!*" Over 3,000 Cubans employed at the Guantanamo naval base (occupied by the United States since 1903) walked off the job in the first general work stoppage at the base in fifty eight years. They joined in celebrating the establishment of socialist Cuba and then on May 2 returned to their jobs.¹⁶

On May 1, 1965, in Havana, Fidel Castro

denounced the invasion of the Dominican Republic by U.S. marines, calling it "one of the most criminal and shameful events in this century." Signs at the demonstration of hundreds of thousands read, "We Denounce Yankee Massacre in Santo Domingo"; "Solidarity With All Peoples that are Fighting Imperialism—from Vietnam to Venezuela, from the Dominican Republic to the Congo!"¹⁷

In his 1972 May Day speech in Santiago, President Salvador Allende Gossens accused the United States of imposing an economic blockade on Chile, and pointed, among other things, to the fact that the U.S. blocked the granting of long-term development credits to Chile by international banks such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.¹⁸ By 1973, Allende was dead, his socialist government overthrown in a coup engineered by the CIA and U.S. corporations in conjunction with General Augusto Pinochet, who seized power.¹⁹

May Day demonstrations were banned under the brutal Pinochet dictatorship. A report from Chile on May 1, 1978, noted, "About 300 people were arrested in Santiago today when police dispersed a May Day demonstration which had been called in spite of government ban. Demonstrators gathered in a city plaza and shouted 'Liberty' and 'Long Live May Day.'"²⁰ On the following May Day, the police arrested hundreds of people trying to hold rallies. A woman told a reporter that "if the police wanted to lock up every person who was against the government, they will have to arrest all of Chile!" The demonstrators, many of them Communists, shouted, "The people are in the street; they are calling for liberty."²¹

ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

On April 25, 1974, the fascist Salazar dictatorship in Portugal was finally overthrown by an army-led uprising. On May Day, millions of Portuguese poured into the streets of Lisbon and other cities to celebrate. In 1974, Portugal celebrated its first May Day in half a century. Trade unions, political parties, civic and profes-

sional associations, led by the Socialists and Communists, marched for hours through Lisbon, then packed the sports stadium, now named "May First." Banners in the stadium read: "At Last!" and "Poetry Is in the Streets!"

The headline in the London *Times* read: "Lisbon Has a May Day to Remember." The article opened:

Portugal has never seen a day like today, at least not for about 50 years. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Lisbon to celebrate their first legal May Day holiday and the promise of a return to democracy . . . The red carnation, the symbol of Portugal's triumph over fascism, predominated. Many soldiers and sailors joined the celebrating crowds in the main march route and elsewhere throughout the city.²²

In 1975 a military revolution in Ethiopia led by Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam overthrew the dictatorship of Emperor Haile Sallassie. May Day was celebrated for the first time in Addis Ababa on May 1, 1977. A cheering crowd of 300,000 Ethiopians heard Colonel Mengistu point to "many victories" scored by the Ethiopian revolution. "The first and most historic," he added, "was the closing down of American institutions which were the fountains of espionage and exploitation as well as elements that diluted our culture." The cheering increased as Mengistu said that the expulsion of five U.S. agencies the previous week had ended an era of "slavery imposed by Washington."²³

Under the Franco dictatorship, May Day in Spain was celebrated as a religious holiday—the day of Saint Joseph the Laborer. In 1977, two years after Franco's death, the people of Madrid attempted to celebrate May Day as a workers' holiday. But the police, furious over the legalization of the Communist Party three weeks earlier and the recognition of Workers' Commissions, charged the demonstrators. Scores were injured by rubber bullets, smoke grenades and clubs. The police even vented their anger on families picnicking in Madrid's Casa del Campo park. The reporter for the London *Times* wrote:

I helped one young man to a first aid post after police dragged him out of his car by the hair, threw him to

the ground, kicked and clubbed him—and only then asked him for his identification. They left him lying on the ground after checking his papers.²⁴

Widespread protests followed, and the scene on May Day 1978 was quite different. This time a reporter wrote:

Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards took to the streets today in the first freely celebrated May Day since Francisco Franco came to power four decades ago.

In Madrid, perhaps 300,000 people took part in a parade organized jointly by the Communist and Socialist unions. They marched in the rain under red banners, first to the Prado museum, then to the towering Puerto de Alcala, where speakers urged unity of the left.

"Unity! Unity!" shouted the soaked throng gathered around the 10th century triumphal arch. About a million people were reported to have demonstrated across the country.²⁵

At least 36 persons were killed and about 299 wounded at a giant May Day rally on May 1, 1977, at Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul, Turkey. The rally was organized by the Leftist group known as DISK, one of the two big labor federations in Turkey.²⁶ On May Day 1979 more than 1,000 persons were arrested in Istanbul when they tried to hold rallies in defiance of martial law. The leaders of DISK had planned a march to Taksim Square to honor those killed on May Day 1977. Ten of the leaders of Turkey's second largest labor federation were arrested. Outside of Istanbul, another 700 people were arrested for ignoring the 29-hour May Day curfew.²⁷

Tens of thousands of Iranians marched through the streets of Tehran on May 1, 1979, "in a kind of labor celebration that the Shah had banned." The demonstrators ranged from Moslem fundamentalist followers of Ayatollah Khomeini to Communists. The May Day call had been issued by Leftist groups, including the Tudeh [Communist] Party and was supported by the Fedaijeem, the Marxist guerrillas. It was taken up by the religious revolutionary leadership. There were two separate rallies, however, the Leftist rally joined by many of the un-

employed, of 100,000, and the Islamic rally of 30,000.²⁸

"Millions of people took part in May Day parades throughout the world yesterday," observed the London *Daily Telegraph* on May 2, 1979. Not many of these demonstrations were in the United States. By the early 1970s, the Left regained the use of New York's Union Square for the annual May Day celebration. But there were still no parades, and the attendance at the rally was small by former standards. In 1971 the *New York Times* reported that a few hundred persons attended the "traditional May Day gathering," carrying banners with the slogans "End the War in Indochina" and "Free Angela Davis."²⁹ The number at the 1973 Union Square rally had increased to 800 persons, according to the *Times*, which added: "Those in the audience, most of them older people, heard speeches on the themes of corruption in the Nixon Administration, the struggle against capitalism, the farm workers' fight and welfare reform."³⁰

REBUILDING IN THE USA

The small number of participants in U.S. May Day demonstrations produced the following question and answer, published in the *Daily World* (successor to the *Daily Worker*) on the eve of May Day 1978. Henry North of Jamaica, New York, asked:

An old timer on my job told me that there used to be huge May Day parades in this country. Why is May Day today such a big event in other parts of the world but not here?"

Irving Herman, coordinator, Committee for a United Labor and People's May Day, replied that in

the 1930s, 1940s and the early 1950s, New York witnessed massive May Day parades and rallies involving tens of thousands, including the participation of many unions. The May Day of those years reflected the powerful upsurge of the working class and the people during the Depression, World War II and the immediate post-war years.

However, with the advent of the cold war, Herman continued, the hysteria of McCarthyism, passage of the Taft-Hartley law, the disruption of the Left-Center coalition in the CIO, and the expulsion from the CIO of the unions under Left and progressive leadership, the "former broad character of May Day fell victim." But a new situation had emerged in the mid-1970s, reflected in the rank-and-file upsurge in steel, the militancy of the coal miners, and the spirit of struggle among many American workers. "Under these conditions, the possibilities exist to rebuild May Day."

He concluded:

A large, enthusiastic, united front May Day this year will help hasten the day when organized labor itself, particularly that sector under more progressive leadership, will once again assume the leadership in promoting May Days with a strong labor participation.³¹

In its May Day statement of 1977, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, USA, called for a 30-hour week at no cut in pay. "The need for a shorter work week has once again come to the fore," it declared.

Under capitalism technological advances result in fewer jobs. Thus unemployment, which is a constant feature of capitalist society, now remains at a high rate. Many of the 10 million unemployed are youth, particularly Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican. At the same time, conditions of work have become hazardous to life and limb, with industrial accidents and occupational diseases taking an increasing toll. The time is therefore overripe for another major reduction in the work week.³²

The Left did make a renewed effort in 1978 "to rebuild May Day," with the first parade in New York City in many years, held on Saturday, April 29, "to accommodate workers who can not take off Monday, May 1st, to celebrate labor's traditional holiday."³³ The marchers assembled at Tompkins Square at 1:00 p.m., and, led by the labor contingent, organized by local officers and rank-and-filers from seventeen unions, proceeded to Union Square for a 2:30 p.m. rally featuring speakers and entertainment. The United Labor and People's May Day Committee

expressed the hope that the participation of the labor contingent "can spearhead the drive to encourage official labor participation in the organization of future May Days."³⁴

A wide variety of issues were advanced in May Day celebrations throughout the world during the 1980s. In Moscow, slogans proclaimed: "No to the Aggressive Nuclear Strategy of the United States!"; "No to Medium-Range Nuclear Missiles in Europe!"; "No to War!"³⁵ Along with these issues, the key issue in England was unemployment. On May 1, 1981, the "people's march for jobs" left Liverpool on its 280-mile walk to London to demand work for the unemployed.³⁶ In the United States, in New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Boston and other cities, the people's fightback against Reaganism was the central theme of the 1982 May Day parades and rallies. The New York Committee for a United Labor and People's May Day listed the following issues in its May Day Manifesto:³⁷

- Jobs or Unemployment Insurance for all jobless.
- Support for labor's struggles against give-back and takeaway contracts.
- Restore the Reagan-Koch budget cuts of essential social programs.
- Advance the fight against racism and for affirmative action.
- Slash the military budget and end the suicidal arms race.
- Solidarity with peoples fighting for freedom and national independence.
- End U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

PEACE AND SHORTER HOURS

At May Day meetings in the Federal Republic of Germany on May 1, 1983, the main stress was on the campaign against deployment of nuclear weapons. At the same time, trade union leaders urged the government to shorten the work week and introduce a job-creation program to ease rising unemployment. "A shorter working week should become a demand workers can go on strike for," Ernst Haar, leader of the Railway Workers' Union, declared in his May Day speech.³⁸

The call "to end the suicidal arms race" was

also echoed in May Day demonstrations throughout Europe in 1982 and 1983. Along with this was the demand for restoration of detente between the United States and the Soviet Union and abandonment of the new cold war policies of the Reagan Administration.

On May Day 1984 trade union leaders warned Chancellor Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany that there would be strikes if their demands for a shorter work week were ignored.³⁹ When this warning was ignored, the workers did go out on strike. After six weeks, the metalworkers' union won a 38½-hour week without a cut in pay and pledged to continue the struggle to reduce the work week to 35 hours. In Denmark, a general strike for shorter hours took place early in 1985, and the Canadian trade union movement made shorter hours the main issue, as did workers in South America.⁴⁰

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the All Union Committee for the Shorter Work Week sparked an educational campaign in the United States for labor action and pressed Congress to pass the shorter work week bill introduced by Representative John Conyers of Michigan. On the eve of May Day 1985, Conyers reintroduced the Shorter Work Week Bill of 1985, which included: "(1) A reduction of statutory work week to 32 hours; (2) A prohibition of forced overtime, and (3) An increase in pay for overtime from time-and-a-half to double-time."⁴¹

Thus as the centennial of May Day approached, the shorter work week again emerged, along with peace and disarmament, as major demands of the struggle.

Five hundred trade unionists celebrated May Day in Boston on May 1, 1985, with a picket line and rally in solidarity with the workers of South Africa. The picket line, several blocks long, surrounded Deak-Perera Co., the major supplier of South African Krugerrands (gold coins) in the Boston area. Prior to the picketing, several trade unionists sat in at Deak-Perera and became locked in for the evening. Among the unions represented were United Steel Workers of America Local 8751, International United Electrical Workers Local 201, United Food and Commercial Workers Union

Local 616, and Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union Local 26.⁴²

The leaflet distributed at the demonstration was headed: "May 1st. A Day of International Labor Solidarity with South African Workers." It continued:

On May 1, 1886 . . . U.S. workers demonstrated for the 8-hour day, trade union rights, justice and dignity. May 1st is now celebrated as a day of International Solidarity all over the world!

On May 1, 1985 . . . almost 100 years later, South African workers are still fighting for their freedom! the South African apartheid system denies black workers their basic trade union rights.

PICKET AND RALLY!⁴³

The rally that followed emphasized two themes: (1) international solidarity with South African workers against apartheid, and (2) revive May 1 as the holiday of U.S. workers.⁴⁴

The second theme of the rally was also featured in the May Day 1985 issue of *Labor Today*, the militant monthly published in Chicago. Editor Fred Gaboury urged workers in the United States to recapture the historic meaning of May Day and couple it with the current struggle for a shorter work week and workers' rights:

. . . the struggles of nearly a century ago have had tremendous impact on workers around the world and continue today. Workers, the world over, stand in solidarity on May Day. The time has come for U.S. workers to reclaim this holiday as part of their history and join with others, regenerating the spirit of the first May Day and the fight for shorter hours and labor rights.⁴⁵

"Reclaim May Day!" Will Parry appealed in the same issue of *Labor Today*. Parry pointed out that, from the inception of May Day, the U.S. corporate power structure had sought "to falsify its significance and to make its observance impossible in the land of its birth." Their major tactic had been red-baiting:

May Day, born in the USA thirty-one years before the October Revolution in the USSR, is presented as though it had been secretly hatched in the Kremlin. It is portrayed as something alien to the struggles of the very working class that gave it birth.

In place of May Day, U.S. workers were offered "Loyalty Day" and "Law Day" by "people who invented loyalty oaths" and who "cynically flout the nation's labor laws."

Surely it is time, and past time, for the working people of our country to reclaim their significant May Day heritage.

Let May 1, 1986, mark the rebirth of the observance of May Day in cities across our country—across the land whose labor movement created this mighty holiday and gave it to the workers of the whole world.⁴⁶

In a number of cities, including New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Milwaukee and Chicago, plans got under way to "reclaim May Day" on the centennial of the first May Day at Haymarket Square. In Chicago, more than fifty community, cultural, labor and religious groups formed the Haymarket Centennial Committee to prepare a month-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of May Day and the Haymarket martyrs.

Among the events planned for May Day 1986 are conferences on labor history, concerts with folk and ethnic musicians, film and video festivals, exhibits and mass rallies. In its call the committee said, "The Haymarket Centennial gives us a chance to correct the misrepresentation of history and reclaim our history and culture." The committee's call urged massive support for the 1986 commemoration, making it "a celebration of the struggles of the workers everywhere for peace, justice and equality, as well as democratic rights on the job."⁴⁷

As far back as May 1951, at the height of the cold war, Gus Hall, then national secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, expressed a wish and voiced a prediction. "Some day," he wrote, "all the people of the United States will proudly hail and understand that which today only a minority does—what a great honor May Day is to our working class." He looked forward to the time when "the working class of the USA will be in a position to make this day—May Day—that started in support of the struggle for the eight-hour day, a legal holiday celebrated by all the people of the United

States."⁴⁸

It is to be hoped that the centennial of May Day—May 1, 1986—will witness the launching of a vigorous campaign to achieve this goal. Then once again the workers of the United States will observe a world Labor Day together with their brothers and sisters throughout the world. In the words of a Milan correspondent of May 1, 1890, on the first international May Day:

On this day laborers all over the world should feel the unity of their class as a bond superior to all others, and should give peaceable expression to that feeling in taking a holiday and demonstrating.⁴⁹ □

Notes

- 1 *New York Times*, April 23, 1961; May 2, 1962.
- 2 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1963.
- 3 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1962.
- 4 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1962.
- 5 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1964.
- 6 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1965.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *London Times*, May 3, 1965.
- 9 *New York Times*, May 2, 1966.
- 10 *Canada's Party of Socialism*, pp. 266-7.
- 11 *New York Times*, May 2, 1967.
- 12 *Ibid.*, May 22, 1968.
- 13 *London Times*, May 2, 1968.
- 14 *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, May 5, 1969.
- 15 *New York Times*, May 2, 1975; *London Times*, May 2, 1975.
- 16 *New York Times*, April 30, May 2 & 3, 1961.
- 17 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1965.
- 18 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1972.
- 19 Paul E. Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976*, Pittsburgh, 1977, pp. 231-47.
- 20 *London Times*, May 2, 1978; *New York Times*, May 2, 1978.
- 21 *New York Times*, May 2, 1979.
- 22 *London Times*, May 2, 1974.
- 23 *New York Times*, May 2, 1977.
- 24 *London Times*, May 2, 1977.
- 25 *New York Times*, May 2, 1976.
- 26 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1977.
- 27 *London Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1979; *New York Times*, May 2, 1979.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *London Times*, May 2, 1971; *New York Times*, May 2, 1971.
- 30 *New York Times*, May 2, 1973.
- 31 *Daily World*, April 27, 1978.
- 32 *Daily World*, April 30, May 1, 1977.
- 33 Statement issued by Committee for a United Labor and People's May Day, *Daily World*, April 30, May 1, 1978.
- 34 *Daily World*, April 30, May 2, 1978; *New York Times*, April 30, 1978.
- 35 *London Times*, May 2, 1981.
- 36 *Ibid.*, *New York Times*, May 2, 1981.
- 37 Call for May Day Conference; copy of leaflet in possession of author; *New York Times*, May 2, 1982.
- 38 *New York Times*, May 2, 1983; *London Times*, May 2, 1983.
- 39 *New York Times*, May 2, 1984; *London Times*, May 2, 1984.
- 40 *New York Times*, July 2, 5, 10, 1985.
- 41 *Labor Today*, May 1985.
- 42 *Daily World*, May 18, 1985.
- 43 Copy of leaflet in author's possession.
- 44 *Daily World*, May 18, 1985.
- 45 *Labor Today*, May 1985.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *The Worker*, May 29, 1951.
- 49 Quoted in *In These Times*, August 6-12, 1977.

Consolidating the All-People's Front In the Chicago Elections

TED PEARSON

Orange and blue campaign posters and balloons were everywhere. There was plenty of food and good music. But most of all, there were people, Black, white and Latino, who had come to celebrate a victory.

Everyone who entered the hall was greeted with hugs and kisses like warriors returning from a hard but victorious battle.

And if you had asked someone from the 22nd Ward they wouldn't have disputed the analogy.

Just a few hours before, they had defeated the regular Democratic Party's machine candidates and elected Jesus Garcia, 29, alderman by a three to one margin.

(Marcia Davis, *Daily World*, March 29, 1986)

Special elections were held in seven Chicago aldermanic wards, including the 22nd, last March 18. The ward boundaries were established by a court-ordered remap to correct gerrymandering that denied Blacks and Latinos representation in the City Council. Victories by independent candidates in four of the seven wards could shift the balance of power in the City Council in favor of the forces led by Mayor Harold Washington.

Since Washington's victory in April 1983, a council majority of 29 white, male aldermen, led by Alderman and Cook County Democratic Party Chairman Edward R. Vrdolyak, has refused to confirm most of the mayor's appointments to city agencies, district boards and commissions. Over 50 of these appointees are yet unconfirmed, and the terms for which many of them were appointed have already expired. Dozens of bodies sit regularly without a single member serving a current term, but state law allows the holdovers to remain until their successors have been confirmed by the council.

The city's budget has frequently been held hostage by the council majority, jeopardizing

the city's credit rating. The differences between the racist majority and the Black-white minority council coalition, although seemingly minor in terms of total spending, include important planks of the mayor's affirmative action program and services to working-class neighborhoods, while the "29" have held out for special patronage and graft-laden projects.

The machine did all it could to preserve its council majority, running candidates in all seven wards. It spent thousands of dollars and imported organizers. It aggressively used racism, redbaiting and intimidation. Through its control of the Board of Election Commissioners, thousands of voters were disenfranchised, and irregularities in the election process abounded.

Nevertheless, candidates of the Washington movement won election outright in two wards: Jesus Garcia in the 22nd and Percy Giles, who is Afro-American, in the 37th. Luis Gutierrez won a narrow but absolute majority in the 26th Ward, but court challenges by his machine-backed opponent, Manuel Torres, have temporarily blocked him from taking his seat.

In the 15th Ward on the South Side, Marlene Carter won a plurality over six other Afro-American candidates, but must face incumbent Frank Brady in an April 29 runoff. Observers expect she will easily poll a majority.

In addition to the City Council victories, there were other important victories by candidates endorsed by the Washington movement. Of six candidates put up by the people's forces for the Illinois legislature, five won. Among them was Illinois' first Latino State Senator, Miguel Del Valle, whose campaign theme was against plant closings and for jobs. State Sen. Glen Dawson, a close friend and supporter of Vrdolyak and a resident of the 10th Ward, lost to Howard Brookins, an Afro-American endorsed by Mayor Washington. State Rep. Larry Bullock, the only Afro-American openly allied

Ted Pearson is district organizer of the Communist Party of Illinois.

with Vrdolyak, lost to the movement's candidate, Louvana Jones.

In the County Courts, of nine Washington-endorsed candidates for judge, six won. On the Cook County Board of Commissioners seven of Washington's eight endorsed candidates won, including five Afro-Americans, the largest number ever elected to that body.

REAGANITES DEFEATED

The election results contradict the daily claim of newspapers, television and radio that Mayor Harold Washington is on his way out politically. It refutes the story that Washington's support is waning among whites and Latinos, and even some Black people. The results show that Washington's base is strong and healthy. He remains the leader of a movement for democracy, against racism and for economic justice.

This movement is Black, white and Latino, and it is determined and united in its fight for progressive representation in the City Council, just as it is united in its fight for jobs, for fairness and honesty in government. The March 18 election was a big step forward and further consolidated the movement's breadth, unity and organization. This consolidation of the all-peoples forces comes in the wake of a full scale attack on the movement by federal, state and local forces representing the most corrupt, racist and militarist sections of monopoly capital. This strengthened movement now faces the challenge of defeating Reaganism in the November election, complicated by the dangerous emergence of supporters of the fascist Lyndon LaRouche on the Democratic Party ticket. The biggest challenge will be the February 24 and April 14, 1987, elections, when Chicago will re-elect its mayor and City Council.

The dynamic of the Washington movement is rooted in the history of the decades-long struggle against corrupt, Big Business racism, arrogance and gangster rule of the city. The "last of the big city political machines" led by the late Richard J. Daley faced many challenges but few defeats prior to 1979. The struggle for Black representation has been a central thread

of the struggle for reform and democracy. Prior to the 1970s, some Afro-Americans won office after tremendous struggles. They were often incorporated into the "machine." This changed dramatically when Afro-Americans demanded that Black elected officials take a stand against police brutality and for a just share of the public services and jobs being dispensed from City Hall as personal patronage. The first real break came when the late U.S. Rep. Ralph Metcalfe denounced police brutality in the Black community and broke with mayor Daley. This led to campaigns for a Black mayor in 1977 and 1979. In 1983 U.S. Rep. Harold Washington, who succeeded Metcalfe as representative from the First CD, became the candidate who united the entire Afro-American community, a majority of Puerto Ricans and Mexican voters, and the multinational labor movement in 1983. The Washington campaign of 1983 brought together a man and a movement at a moment that was ripe. The essence of the democratic demand for Black representation was translated into the fight for peace, equality, democracy and jobs for all, regardless of race or nationality. It was the leading edge of the fight against Reaganism by the all-people's forces.

The setting for the campaign was the developing nationwide all-people's fight against Reaganism. The Washington Administration is an all-people's administration. While it unites labor and many other sectors that are objectively anti-monopoly in outlook and concerns, the movement has a broad democratic character. Indeed, faced with the need to govern an urban area under ruthless economic attack by the Reaganites and the military-industrial complex, the administration has carefully avoided antagonizing those sectors of monopoly who are concerned with stability in government and reversing the suicidal drive of the Reaganites toward the illusion of strategic military superiority and world domination. The Washington Administration and the movement that created it are thus on the front line of the all-people's forces. This is why the Reaganites have joined forces with the most reactionary local politicians to attempt the crucifixion of this administration.

Most recently, the racist, Right-wing effort to destroy the administration has utilized a criminal to entrap supporters of the mayor. This scheme may have been cooked up in the June 1984 meeting between Vrdolyak and Reagan top aides James Baker and Edward Rollins.

An FBI "mole," Michael Raymond, has allegedly uncovered corruption in Chicago. Raymond is wanted for burglary and has been indicted for murder in Florida, but is enlisted in the FBI's "protected witness" program. He reportedly told the FBI he would "give Chicago" to them if they would extend their protection after his latest heist was interrupted by state police in Tennessee. Under FBI direction he worked to entrap Afro-American political leaders, since as "machine" 33rd Ward Alderman Richard Mell put it on a radio show, "in a Black administration there's no point in looking for corruption among the whites."

A federal grand jury has reportedly heard Raymond implicate a few aldermen and city administrators in alleged bribes. Most of the sums involved had been dutifully reported by these aldermen as campaign contributions or were turned over to other, non-political charities, like the United Nations Children's Fund. In the two cases where genuine impropriety was evident, the people were immediately fired by the administration. Nonetheless, the newsmedia have kept up a steady drumbeat about "scandalous corruption" in City Hall.

According to a study by the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, the two largest daily papers in Chicago, the *Sun Times* and *Tribune*, together assigned 40 reporters who wrote 118 stories based on illegal "leaks" from the federal grand jury between Christmas 1985, and March 1, 1986, a period of 65 days, for an average of almost two per day. In those stories, the *Sun Times* alone named Harold Washington 276 times in a context linking him with corruption, "far more than the facts of the stories warranted suggesting that the mayor might be an eventual target of the continuing federal investigation or that his administration has become so deeply mired in corruption that it is no longer fit to govern."

The timing of the "leaks" was clearly aimed at influencing the outcome of the March 18 special election. Hardly a word of the program and problems faced by the administration found their way into print or on the air except in Black-oriented or "movement" papers, like the *Chicago Defender*, the *All Chicago City News* and the *Daily World*.

RED-BAITERS AND RACISTS ROUTED

The movement around Harold Washington is a people's movement. It is a loose coalition of labor and progressive rank-and-file trade unionists, the Afro-American community, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican communities, middle strata liberals and independents, and important sections of the "business community" who are concerned about the constant City Council battling that has helped destabilize the city's economy. The program of this movement has been anchored on two main issues: representation and equality for Chicago's Black and Latino minorities (who together are a majority), and an end to the cronyism and corruption that has locked out all but the well-connected from city politics, industry and business.

Washington has said the underlying issues are jobs and the defeat of the Reaganites, because the Reaganite drive for military superiority is wreaking havoc among the people of our nation's cities. For tens of thousands, the question of Afro-American, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican representation boils down to jobs and equality of economic opportunity. That's why tens of thousands of white, as well as Black and Latino, voters went to the polls and rejected the Reaganite Democratic Party machine on March 18.

The machine, led by Vrdolyak, utilized racism and anti-Communism against the movement. The focus was on the Latino wards. Free, mass circulation Spanish language newspapers, suspected of ties with Cuban emigré terrorists and drug runners, accused progressive candidates of being Communists, supporters of the mayor, and drug dealers. The progressive candidates unhesitatingly campaigned as allies of

Mayor Washington. They condemned Red-baiting as a smokescreen to hide the issues of unemployment, deteriorating community public services and people's representation.

The Reaganites also tried to link Washington and his allies with anti-Semitism, anti-trade unionism and the extreme nationalism of Louis Farrakhan. The Reaganites have studied the coalition well, and they have carefully picked what they think are its weak links. But in these elections, their efforts failed.

It is ironic that defeated 26th Ward aldermanic candidate Manuel Torres should cry about "irregularities" in the elections. In fact, it is Vrdolyak-appointed Board of Election Commissioners that is irregular, and the irregularities all aim at depriving the progressive movement of a majority in the City Council. In the 26th Ward, won narrowly by movement candidate Gutierrez, polls opened late, election judges were untrained, ballots were mixed up, and hundreds, if not thousands, of legitimate voters were disenfranchised. These were but a few of the "dirty tricks" of the Vrdolyakers.

In the 22nd Ward forged letters on the Mayor's stationery went to selected precincts calling for a vote for the machine's candidate. Posters were anonymously printed and pasted to every lamp post on 26th Street, in the Mexican community, quoting Mayor Washington as hailing Garcia as "my man in the 22nd Ward," a trick that evidently backfired.

The movement overcame these "tricks" because it was organized at the grassroots. Precinct workers brought the truth to the voters personally, door-to-door. In the 15th and the 26th Wards the movement organized supporters of its program both inside and outside the wards to bring the message of the campaign to the voters personally. In the 22nd and the 37th wards the movement was organized block by block, precinct by precinct. Ronelle Mustin, campaign manager for Jesus Garcia, observed that over 90 per cent of the campaign workers "lived in the precinct they worked."

The popular forces united around Harold Washington have taken up the battle cry of the overwhelming majority of the people in Chi-

cago and the country. They are for an end to the madness of the arms race, for unity of labor and the oppressed, and for emergency steps to meet the crisis of the workers whose jobs are being exported to low wage havens abroad. They are for equal representation in government of workers of all races and nationalities, and the Afro-American and Hispanic communities. This movement has emerged as the forward edge of the Illinois movement against Reaganism.

COMMUNISTS' TRUE ROLE

A very special role was played by Communists in this campaign. Long before 1983, Communists had been part of the labor movement, and grassroots movements in Black, white and Latino communities. In these struggles Communists have fought to keep the eye of the people on the main enemy, the multinational monopolies and the most aggressive and dangerous sector of the monopolies, the Reaganite military-industrial complex. We have fought for a broad understanding of the necessity for working-class and people's unity, first and foremost against racism and redbaiting. We have fought for an understanding that united struggle to eliminate inequality through such measures as affirmative action are in the direct interest of all, regardless of race or nationality.

Communists raise the demand for public ownership, operation and control of the basic industries being abandoned by the monopolies.

Although many in the movement still cling to some anti-Communist misconceptions, most reject anti-Communism as a diversion from the main issues.

In this campaign Communists and Young Communists (YCL) were participants, through the organizations and movements of their fellow workers and neighbors. But we also added something special: We tried to bring a deeper awareness of the meaning to the working class of the issues that were being debated in this campaign. The *Daily World*, on March 13, 1986, published a special "Chicago edition" in this city. For the first time since the *Daily Worker* moved to New York in the 1920s, the Marxist

press was printed here. Supporters of the paper distributed 20,000 copies of the paper, featuring many articles on the election.

LABOR'S KEY ROLE

As fresh winds of struggle blow from factories, offices and construction sites, they stir a new political awareness among the rank and file and leadership of the labor movement in Chicago. Coming on the heels of the AFL-CIO in Anaheim, California, this election was bound to catch these fresh winds.

Traditionally the leadership of the Chicago Federation of Labor has been close to the Democratic Party machine. Many trade union leaders are supporting Republican Gov. James Thompson for re-election in 1986 in return for his "working relationship" with labor, in spite of Thompson's total support for Ronald Reagan and his program. However, mayor Washington campaigned for and signed the first collective bargaining contracts for public employees in Chicago's history. The CFL is changing its attitude, and is finding a better friend in the all-people's movement. The contract with AFSCME has been hailed by the *AFL-CIO News* as one of the most forward looking public employee contracts in the country, including strong clauses guaranteeing affirmative action and equal pay for comparable work.

Early in this election campaign a Labor Committee was formed to support the progressive Latino candidates. It united some 80 trade union leaders representing 50 unions. Two hundred unionists attended a labor breakfast to raise funds for these candidates. Some of them also worked for Afro-American movement candidates, but the emphasis was on the hotly contested Mexican-American and Puerto Rican wards. Joe Romano, president of USWA Local 15271 at Danley Machine Co., said,

It is necessary to have this relationship between labor and the community . . . [Unions] can't stop taking an interest once that worker leaves the plant gate at 4:00. We have to do more than having a PAC send a check. We have to have some active people out working in the campaigns in the community to have some effect.

A high point of the Labor Breakfast was the announcement by the three candidates that they were refusing to cross the picket line for interviews by the *Chicago Tribune*, which has been conducting a strike-breaking campaign against its printers, pressmen and mailers for over six months. Present were leaders and rank-and-file strikers from the *Tribune*, who stood beside the candidates as they made their announcement. A day later, the candidates held a news conference on the picket line in front of the Tribune Tower, at which they publicly declined the *Tribune's* endorsement and refused to cross the picket line to be interviewed.

The United Auto Workers sent a letter to every member in the seven wards with its endorsements. UAW rank and filers took an active role in the campaign in some wards. Workers from AFSCME worked especially in the 22nd Ward, including 30 on election day.

The CFL made only one endorsement in the special elections: August Sallas, a leader of Typographical Union Local 16, who was running for Democratic Party Committeeman of the 22nd Ward, with machine support, against Garcia. In announcing the endorsement, CFL President Edward Brabec reportedly said to the assembled CFL delegates that labor needs to look more closely at candidates who seek endorsement than just their union membership.

LaROUCHE DANGER

In the face of these advances by the all-people's forces, the back-door sneak play by supporters of the fascist Lyndon LaRouche onto the Democratic ticket is all the more shocking and ominous. These candidates, who won majorities for nomination to the offices of lieutenant governor and secretary of state, and who walked unopposed into nominations for Congress in the 13th and 15th Districts, are only a few of the hundreds of candidates fielded in the Democratic Party by LaRouche across the country.

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the people who voted for these candidates had no idea whom they voted for. The Democratic Party, under the direction of Vrdo-

lyak, had alienated many voters during the slating process. State Representative Carol Mosely Braun, an Afro-American woman, had announced her candidacy for lieutenant governor and had built a strong base. But Braun, the official floor leader in Springfield and liaison with Mayor Washington, was not tolerated on the ticket. Stevenson was convinced that "two Blacks on the ticket" could cause his defeat (Comptroller Roland Burris, who is Black, was slated for re-election). Vrdolyak next engineered the slating of Aurelia Pucinski, daughter of the Chicago alderman of the same name, for secretary of state. This was a slap in the face of the Illinois Women's Political Caucus, which was supporting Grace Mary Stern, who had been Stevenson's running mate in 1982.

After these insults to progressive voters, the machine took the nomination of their candidates for these offices for granted. Preoccupied as they were with defeating progressive candidates in the primary, they did not print their names on any literature. The results are a dramatic warning of what can happen in the vacuum created by the bankruptcy of a political machine and emphasizes the need for the broadest kind of antifascist unity and cooperation.

Where there was any campaign against the LaRouche candidates they were soundly defeated. For example, Robert Cleland, president of NOMORE (Nuclear Overkill Moratorium), won the Democratic nomination for Congress in the deeply conservative and upperclass North Suburban 11th District over a LaRouche supporter, exposing him as an ultra-Rightist. Nonetheless, the LaRouche candidate polled 4,708 votes compared to Cleland's 8,347.

The news media, which ignored the LaRouche candidates until after they won, now see their task as informing the voters of the positions of the LaRouche movement. However, they make a point of being "balanced." While they brand the LaRouche supporters as a lunatic fringe, the positions the LaRouche candidates articulate on "Star Wars" are those of the current Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger. The LaRouche gang is like the alter-ego of the "Star Wars" mob in power in Washington.

The strong position of Adlai Stevenson, Mayor Harold Washington and other Democratic Party leaders against the LaRouche forces is a contribution. But progressives must work to deepen the awareness of the class essence and base of the LaRouche gang. Communists especially must expose the links between LaRouche, the ultra-Right and the military-industrial complex. The bizarre positions they hold on screening the population for AIDS and quarantining suspected carriers play on the fears of many people, just as their rabid anti-Communism, racism and anti-Semitism do. They demagogically campaign against farm foreclosures and plant closings, laying these evils at the door of the Kremlin, the KGB and the International Monetary Fund. Their past history of violent attacks on Communists and other progressives shows that their extreme conduct is not only rhetorical. The LaRouche group is a threat to democracy that must be opposed for what it is: one of the most demagogic and best financed fascist movements in our country today.

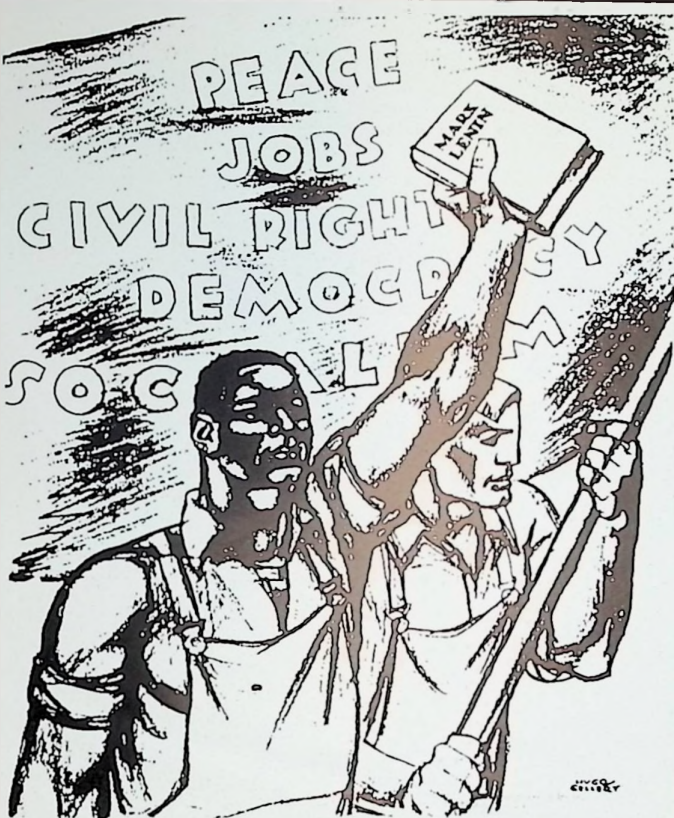
RUDY LOZANO, a trade union organizer and independent political activist, was gunned down in his home three years ago shortly after he ran for alderman of the 22nd ward and lost by a few votes. Mayor Washington and others credit him with building the Black-Latino unity that was a critical part of Washington's victory in 1983. His legacy has been a rallying point and inspiration ever since.

At the victory rally March 18, Jesus Garcia said,

Rudy Lozano's spirit is with us. His death has not been in vain. Our victory tonight is part of a tribute we pay to our fallen heroes, those who were not afraid to say we have the right to not be ignored.

Said Marcos Munoz, a steelworker and precinct captain in the 22nd Ward,

The victory is not for a candidate but for the people themselves. It is a victory for minorities, for Blacks, whites and Latinos. It means a more democratic process to determine our lives, our futures. This is only a beginning. □



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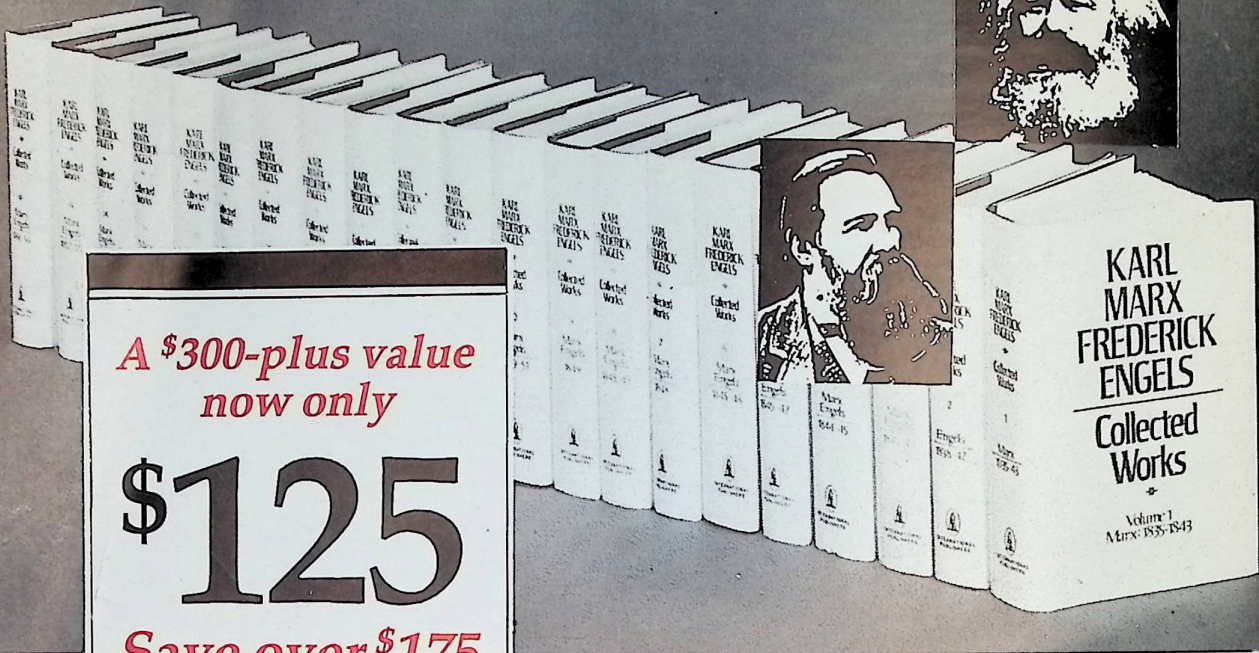
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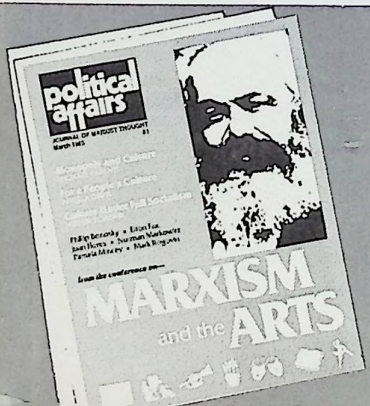
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