

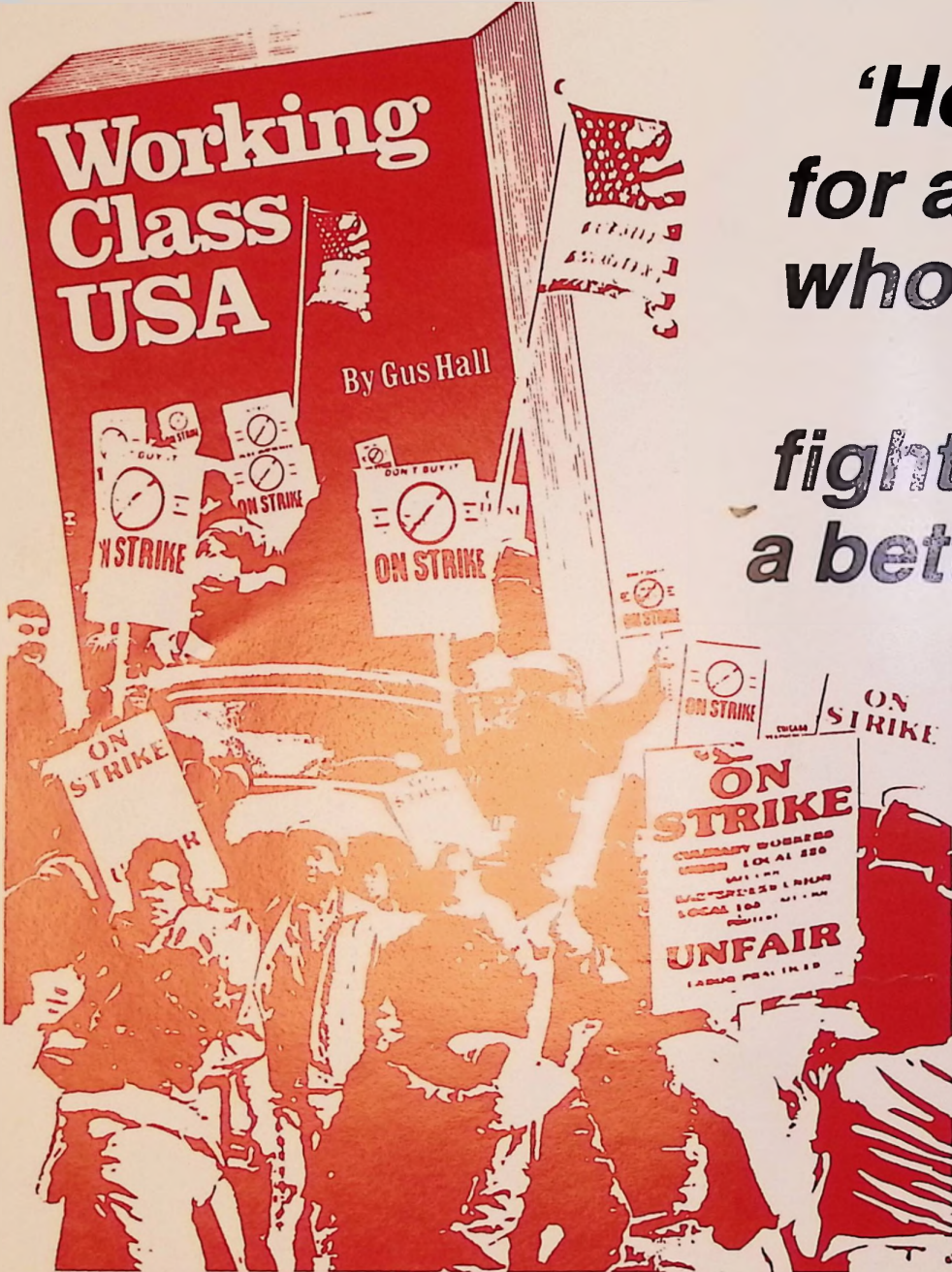
## CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Regret and joy are intertwined, and the struggle for a better life is a constant one. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark in the struggle for equality, but it was far from the end of the road. The struggle for equality is a long and difficult one, and it will continue for many years to come.

**UNFINISHED**  
**AGENDA**

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark in the struggle for equality, but it was far from the end of the road. The struggle for equality is a long and difficult one, and it will continue for many years to come. The act was a step forward, but it was not a final destination. The struggle for equality is a long and difficult one, and it will continue for many years to come.

PAPERS & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF THE CONFERENCE: "EQUALITY—THE UNFINISHED AGENDA"  
Gus Hall • Jarvis Tyner • Bobbie Rabinowitz • Victor Perlo • James Steele  
Raglan George • Kay Tillow • Cecilia McCall • Gus Newport • Michael Zagarell



**'How To'  
for anyone  
who works  
and is  
fighting for  
a better life.**

**The book  
many in  
labor are  
looking for,  
with basic  
answers and  
new ideas.**

To: *Political Affairs*, 235 West 23rd St., New York, NY 10011

☎ (212) 989-4994

Please send me an autographed copy of *Working Class USA: The Power and the Movement*, by Gus Hall, and an introductory sub to *Political Affairs* for \$10!

Payment enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# political affairs

**Theoretical Journal  
of the Communist Party, USA**

**Editorial Board**

Michael Zagarell, Editor  
Leonard Levenson, Associate Editor  
Phillip Bonosky, Lou Diskin  
Tom Hopkins, Robert Lindsay  
Carol Marks, James West  
Esther Moroze, Business Manager  
Norman Goldberg, Art Director

**Cover: Norman Goldberg**

*Political Affairs* (ISSN 0032 3128) is published monthly, except combined September / October, by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc., 235 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011, ☎ (212) 989-4994, to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

**Manuscripts** are invited. If a 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.



**April 1988 Vol. LXVII, No. 4**

Gus Hall

**2 Equality:  
The Unfinished Agenda**

Jarvis Tyner

**8 Cities In Change:  
Prospects for Afro-Americans**

Bobbie Rabinowitz

**14 The Trade Unions Today  
In the Fight for Equality**

Victor Perlo

**17 Jobs for Afro-Americans  
High on the Equality Agenda**

James Steele / Raglan George  
Cecilia McCall / Gus Newport  
Kay Tillow / Michael Zagarell

**24 Black Representation and  
The 1988 Elections  
A Roundtable**

Nikolai Bukharin

**33 The Political Testament of Lenin**

# Equality: The Unfinished Agenda

GUS HALL

This conference is one of many observing Afro-American History Month and is dedicated to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am honored to make some opening remarks. It will not be the same, but collectively we can make up for not having the benefit of Comrade Robert Lindsay's contribution on this occasion.

MANY READ BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, STUDIES AND tracts about history. And, in elaborate ceremonies, many pay homage to the makers of history. However, to study history and honor the

**P**olitical Affairs sponsored a conference, February 20, 1988, in New York City, on the occasion of Afro-American History Month. The papers presented appear in these pages. Their authors are: Gus Hall, national chairman of the Communist Party, USA; Jarvis Tyner, chairman of the New York District, CPUSA; Bobbie Rabinowitz, vice-president, Social Service Employees Union Local 371, AFSCME; and, Victor Perlo, member of the National Executive Committee, CPUSA.

Tony Monteiro's presentation, "Wilson's Apologies for Racism", appeared earlier in the March 1988, *Political Affairs*.

The conference also featured a roundtable discussion on "Black Representation in the 1988 Elections." A condensed version of this too, is published herewith. It was moderated by James Steele, chairman of the National Elections Committee, CPUSA and the panelists were: Raglan George, vice-president, Local 1-3, Fur Leather and Machine Workers, UFCW; Cecilia McCall, national staff, Women for Racial and Economic Equality; Gus Newport, former mayor of Berkeley, Cal.; Kay Tillow, vice-president, Local 1199P, National Union of Hospital and Health Employees; and, Michael Zagarell, editor of *Political Affairs*.

Robert Lindsay, chairman of the Afro-American Equality Committee, CPUSA, scheduled as a featured presenter, was unfortunately unable to participate because of illness. □

makers of history in ways that do not stimulate and prepare the living to become better fighters may be very good for the soul, but they do not put bread and butter on the tables of the poor.

To pay tribute to great, militant fighters in ways that do not make us more effective leaders in carrying on their militant legacies may be emotionally gratifying, but it does very little to win affirmative action programs or to stop the racist attacks in the Howard Beaches of our nation's cities.

If there is a similar thread that flows throughout the lives of such eminent personalities in history as Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Winston, Fannie Lou Hamer, Paul Robeson and William L. Patterson it is that they were all thinkers, dreamers, organizers and mobilizers. All of these great fighters understood that people in motion, in struggle, are the very essence of all human progress. That was also the essence of the simple, last, unforgettable words of Joe Hill just before the rope was tied around his neck, "Don't mourn for me. Organize and fight."

This should be the theme of this conference—how better to organize and fight against racism.

Our purpose should not be to pontificate or make long-winded generalizations, abstract assessments or even witty observations that might tickle our fancies and impress our egos. This will not sharpen our ideological weapons in one of the most difficult and vital battles of our time.

Our aim should be to develop, mold and formulate better policies, to fine tune our tactics and to seek that which unites the maximum and broadest cross-sections of our people in the struggle against racism. Of course we should take what is best from the past. We must take note of and learn from the progress made, for the specific purpose of using and building on it. We should also take note of the setbacks and weaknesses in order to overcome and avoid them in the future.

In all fields of struggle it is always necessary to review and even repeat the basic and most elementary truths—for ourselves but also for the uninitiated and the young. In the struggle against racism we must always keep on the front burner the truth that racism is morally, ethically, legally, scientifically, in every way wrong. It is unacceptable and non-negotiable.

### **BASIC TRUTHS**

In 1965, the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The resolution defined racial discrimination as:

Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other fields of public life.

Afro-Americans constitute a national minority who are victims of racial, national and class oppression.

It is also a basic truth that racism is a device, a means by which corporations make extra profits. It is also a means of increasing the rate of exploitation of all workers, Black and white.

Racism is one of the most profitable systems of capitalist exploitation. The latest estimate is that racism makes it possible for the giant corporations and multinationals each year to squeeze 150 billion dollars in extra profits. Thus, if the extra profits were eliminated, racism would begin to wither away.

Racism is an ideological poison that infects white workers and seduces them into acting against their own class interests, which further adds to the bloated corporate profits. It is a basic truth that exploitation and corporate profits are the two economic pillars of capitalism. Without exploitation for private corporate profits capitalism would be socialism!

The roots of racism are intertwined around the two pillars of exploitation and corporate profits. Exploitation for corporate profits is the

dividing line in the struggle between the class of exploiters and the class of exploited. Thus, there is a close affinity between the class struggle and the struggle against racism.

In the December 1987 issue of *Political Affairs*, Comrade Robert Lindsay wrote:

Understanding the centrality of the class struggle does not just affect the way one approaches the issue of relations between the Black community and labor. It is also critical to correctly understanding the new relations within the Black community. Within the Afro-American community there are also class divisions. And these divisions affect how various sectors see the path to equality.

Today there are new factors that impact on the struggle against racism, one of the biggest being the seven years of Reagan racism, seven years of unprecedented attacks on the Afro-American community. The aim has been and is to destroy the gains made in the last fifty years in the area of civil and human rights.

Spearheaded by the Reagan Department of Justice, the corrupt, thieving attorney general and the Reagan-appointed reactionary, anti-labor, racist judges, the offensive has been devastating for Afro-Americans in all walks of life.

The Reagan Administration has largely succeeded in dismantling the administrative and regulatory bodies that were established to enforce laws and regulations affecting all aspects of civil rights. They gutted the Civil Rights Commission and castrated the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Because of this, it is clear that, in the struggle against racism, there can be less reliance on legal recourse and that the struggles today, of necessity, must rely more on grassroots mass actions.

During these past seven years, the overall quality of life for Afro-Americans has greatly deteriorated. In fact, the quality of life of Afro-Americans is now lower than it was fifteen years ago. The twenty-five percent, depression-level unemployment among Black workers has become the permanent norm.

The fifty percent of Black teenagers who are unemployed have become the economic "untouchables." Forty-two percent of all Afro-

American children live in poverty. Millions are homeless, live in unlivable conditions and millions more are forced to double and triple up in apartments unfit for human habitation.

The economic downward mobility affects all workers, but, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the decline is most drastic among Afro-American workers. Many Afro-American communities are now the new inner city ghost towns. Plant closings continue in industries and cities where there are large Afro-American communities. Runaway shops are deserting the Harlems, Newarks, Youngstowns, Detroit and Chicagos of our country.

Because of the devastation of the structural crisis most Afro-American workers are without any job security. In greater numbers they are without unemployment benefits or medical insurance. They are the majority of the 35 million Americans without any kind of medical coverage. And, they are the long-term unemployed.

### REAGAN RACISM

While there has been progress in the struggle against racism, it remains a critical obstacle to class unity. The Reagan-Meese offensive against affirmative action programs has had a crippling effect on the struggle for equality in hiring, and in shop-floor advancement.

In a period when there is a decline in industrial jobs, the racist practice of last-to-be-hired and first-to-be-fired has an especially destructive impact. Therefore, the struggle against racism and against the practice of racial discrimination remains a key element in the molding of workingclass unity.

The problems related to declining jobs, elimination of job classifications and the threat of plant closings adds a new dimension to the struggle against racism.

The level of racism presents a graphic chart of cross-currents. There is no question, Reagan's racist policies have slowed down the improvement in the overall atmosphere in our country. Reaganism has emboldened the inveterate foes of equality, brought into the open the most backward elements.

Racist violence against Black people is in-

creasing. In most major cities there are white enclaves which Blacks enter at the risk of their lives, patrolled by roving fascistic gangs of thugs and outright gangsters. Vigilantism is on the rise.

Police brutality is an everyday occurrence in the Afro-American communities. Howard Beach, Bensonhurst, Bernard Goetz and the rise of a network of racist, fascist youth gangs called "skinheads," are prime examples of all this.

Reaganism has encouraged elements like the Ku Klux Klan to perform in the light of day the shameless and bestial actions they formerly committed under the cover of night. The Reagan Justice Department is the coordinator and protector of racism. It seeks to rip to shreds the 14th and 15th Amendments, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. It defies the U.S. Congress and the Constitution with the vengeance of born-again slaveholders.

While there has been an increase of racist violence, there has *not* been any noticeable increase of open racist attitudes among white workers or the masses of white people.

Most white Americans do not condone racism as they understand it. They do not accept the basic premise of race superiority. As a result, the monopoly corporations have sugarcoated and repackaged racism. Today there are new features and new forms of racism.

Blaming the victim is the most common and widespread disguise of racism today. It affects broad sections of the population. It is a rationalization for destruction of social programs while regions deteriorate, cities crumble and neighborhoods are turned into unlivable slums.

It excuses, apologizes for and ultimately encourages violence against Afro-Americans and other nationally oppressed people. It is a license for the crimes of monopoly corporations.

The ultra-Right argues that legal equality has already been won, that Afro-Americans have the same opportunities as other citizens. Therefore, they argue, social programs are counterproductive and are the source of what they call the "pathological decay" of the Black family and community. According to the ultra-Right, Blacks have become dependent upon

welfare handouts.

No longer able to push the lie of genetic inferiority, the ultra-Right has substituted the myth of cultural inferiority. A blatantly vicious expression of this was a statement by New York City's mayor: "For many whites crime has a Black face." And his police commissioner added insult to injury when he said, "It is the Blacks who are victims of criminality. And it is the Blacks who are perpetuating those crimes."

It is always necessary to condemn racism, racist violence and discrimination. But it is not enough to be on record, even public record.

The test of our understanding and our commitment is how effectively we are able to convince, organize and mobilize the maximum number of people to condemn and take part in some form of mass demonstrative action.

The test of our commitment is what initiatives we take. The main challenge for us, as Communists and progressives, is how effective we are in moving sections of the white majority into united Black-white struggle against racism, in words and deeds.

One of the obstacles on the path of united mass demonstrations is an underestimation of the readiness of white workers and people to take part in anti-racist actions. Because of this there are not nearly enough initiatives taken and, when there are efforts to organize united Black-white actions, they tend to lack militancy. They tend to be on a very minimal level.

This leaves a vacuum into which the separatists and other phony elements tend to jump. Attempting to fill this vacuum, they organize actions that are counterproductive and divisive.

All past experience shows that a growing section of white Americans are ready and willing to participate in protests against racist violence, against discrimination and segregation.

For example, there are some important lessons in the struggle to simultaneously desegregate housing and schools in Yonkers, New York. There, the decision of Federal Judge Leonard Sands set some important new legal precedents that I think could be applied to similar situations.

The decision, when it is carried out, will

put an end to a "whites only" section of the city by mandating the construction of new, affordable housing to be built with federal, state and city funds. This will effectively put an end to separated Black and white neighborhood schools. And the construction of the new housing will provide jobs for the unemployed.

This concrete struggle created a tactical question because one of the problems has been that, while there is a very vocal minority—mainly homeowners and landlords—who are against the plan, the majority are either neutral or support the plan and they are finding it difficult to express publicly how they feel.

And of course the mass media gives front-page coverage to every possible racist statement, every possible opinion against the desegregation plan, presenting a wrong, one-sided picture that encourages even the closet racists to come out in the open. This is a typical and important tactical question that arises in most of these struggles.

We must also draw the conclusion from battles like this one that, without concrete initiatives by Communists and other progressive and Left forces, the private sentiments of the majority remain just that—private.

### **AN ACTION-REACTION DYNAMIC**

To transform people's sentiments into vocal expression and actions, people must see that there are others who think as they do. And more, they must see that there are others who are willing to come together, stand up and speak out to put an end to criminal violence, racism, segregation, discrimination, anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry and intolerance in their neighborhoods.

Anti-racist movements usually begin as immediate responses to racist attacks. But they can develop into full-blown movements for equality in the community—in housing, in education, in community services, in job and recreational opportunities.

The developments of the past few months indicate that there is an action-reaction dynamic taking place in our country, on all levels. There is the rise of racism, chauvinism and anti-Semi-

tism, stemming from the Reagan-Meese offensive policies. And then there is the opposite motion, the emergence of the anti-racist majority, the new thought-patterns and coalitions against racism.

For example, Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic nomination for President reflects these counter currents. On the one hand, Jackson is getting the support of increasing numbers of workers, of the more progressive white voters. But on the other, racism is still a factor influencing the mass of voters in one way or another. Of course, not all the people who do not vote for Jackson are influenced by racism.

The decline of racist attitudes is expressed in the dramatic decline of the negative vote against Jackson. And it is worthy of note that Afro-Americans, running for Congress and mayors of cities, do not run into the same problems in the same way.

The Afro-American people are part of the people's majorities. They are part of the great anti-Reagan majority. They are part of the overwhelming majority of Americans who are concerned about preserving human existence on earth. They are part of the majority who see the danger in the ultra-Right, fascist fringe. They are part of the democratic majority.

The tactical challenge is how to integrate the struggle against racism into these majority movements. And how to integrate the issues of the majority movements into the struggles against racism. This can be a source of great strength for all the struggles. In order to achieve this we must fine-tune our tactics.

This can be done only by projecting the issues and programs that overlap, such as democracy and racism, wages and racism, housing and racism, education and racism, etc. However, it is only through unity in struggle that we can meet this tactical challenge.

Our initiatives must be initiatives that build unity.

Our tactics must be tactics that unify.

Our actions must be united actions.

The very essence of tactics is finding the ways to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. The challenge is how to build up

the forces behind the positive and isolate the forces that promote the negative.

In today's conditions it is possible and necessary to think in terms of new levels of unity. There is a great need to struggle for a new level of unity of the Afro-American community. It is possible and necessary to achieve a new level of unity of our multiracial, multinational, male-female working class on the shop floor and in the trade union movement on all levels.

There is a need for a new level of unity between labor and the Afro-American community in all areas—political action, housing, legislation, etc. The relationship between the Afro-American people's movements and the working class was clearly stated by Comrade Henry Winston when he wrote in 1975:

The objective historical process is merging Black workers with the general working class and the class struggle. But to convey the impression that the Black people as a whole merge into the working class obscures, in particular, the responsibility of white workers in building an alliance between the multiracial working class and the Black liberation movement and all the oppressed as central to the anti-monopoly struggle.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was dealing with this same concept when he said:

The coalition of an energized section of labor, Negroes, the unemployed and welfare recipients may be the source of power that reshapes economic relationships and ushers in a breakthrough to a new level of social reform. The total elimination of poverty, now a practical possibility, the reality of equality in race relations and other profound structural changes in society may well begin here.

The struggle for equality is a many-sided, multi-level struggle. It must take on the specific cases of inequality, injustice and discrimination. It must take on the specific cases of racist violence, police brutality and harassment. But it must also take on the task of creating an atmosphere in which racism is considered impermissible, illegal, culturally and socially unacceptable. Therefore, the struggle must be educational. It must work to create a climate of



good neighborliness, living and working together as equals.

It is a scientific fact that racism has been implanted into human society. It is not an inherited human characteristic. There are no genes or chromosomes that produce racist characteristics. Thus, no human being is born a racist. People must be taught to hate. People must be brainwashed into becoming prejudiced against other human beings because they are different.

The seeds of racism can only take root and grow in societies where the few get rich by exploiting the many. Racist ideology is geared specifically toward making racist practices, which are patently unjust, seem just because people are taught to feel a false sense of superiority. However, the only winners when racism is practiced are the corporations, bankers and landlords. All the rest of us are losers.

Thus, we come to the nagging question: is it possible to eliminate racism—economically, politically, ideologically, culturally and socially? The answer is not only that it is possible, but it is inevitable.

### **SOCIALISM IS MASSIVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Then the next logical question is: can racism be eliminated while we still live under capitalism, with the two opposing classes—the exploiters and the exploited. The answer to that question is in the negative. It is not possible.

Lenin, who gave a lot of thought to such matters said, "It is impossible to abolish national oppression under capitalism since this requires the abolition of classes and the introduction of socialism."

Thus, as long as the system of capitalism exists, the classes and the class struggle will continue. Therefore, because racism is an integral part of the capitalist system, and as long as racism provides huge extra profits for the exploiters they will continue to propagate and promote racism and inject racism into the life-line of the system.

So long as racism is one of the most profitable tools of exploitation, the ruling class will continue to spend human and financial resources in the effort to keep the fires of racism

going. Under capitalism it is impossible to do away with the class struggle and therefore with racism. But it is just as true that it is possible to win reforms, to win wage increases and victories in many areas against racism.

Like weeds in a garden, reforms can be cut back and controlled. But it is an endless, tedious task. If you relax and neglect the weeds, they will not only grow back but will take over the garden almost as soon as your back is turned. The roots of exploitation and the roots of racism will rot and die only when capitalism is weeded out. Because socialism will eliminate these basic flaws, these weeds of capitalism, socialism is inevitable.

In a sense, socialism is a massive affirmative action program. As in many other socialist countries, it is nowhere proven more clearly than in the Soviet Union. This was a vast land of many nationalities and peoples on different levels of social development.

The more advanced industrially were the Russian and Ukrainian Republics. Most of the 113 nationalities were almost without industries, mainly illiterate and some were even without a written language.

Today the Soviet republics are on an equal level of industrial and cultural development. They live in peace, friendship and prosperity together. Under socialism, there are no classes or special-interest groups that need to promote racism, chauvinism or anti-Semitism for self-gain. Therefore, the roots of these evils will wither and die.

But in the United States of today, in the class struggle and in the struggle against racism, it is important to heed the wise counsel of Frederick Douglass when he proclaimed, "Power concedes nothing without a fight. It never has. It never will."

If Martin Luther King, Jr., could be with us today, and if he were to give his famous "I have a dream" speech again, I am sure he would add that the dream of "Equality, the Unfinished Agenda," will only be truly finished when socialism replaces capitalism in this great country of ours. □

# Cities in Change: Prospects for Afro-Americans

JARVIS TYNER

The African-American people played a critical role in the development of our country.

People of African ancestry were the main source of labor which served as the basis for the primitive accumulation of capital. This accumulation was the economic foundation for the development of this nation's commercial and industrial capitalism. Thus, the first great wealth expropriated by the early capitalists was accumulated through trafficking in human beings and the sale of crops of cotton, indigo, rice and tobacco—the valuable products of slave labor. The African-American people were forced to pay a heavy price in loss of life, humiliation, pain and unpaid labor.

The African-American people will never give up the claim to a decent life as full citizens in this nation. Our historic relationship to this country, despite the difficulties, *indeed, because of the difficulties* we have had to endure, entitles us to proclaim loud and clear that this land is our land. As a people, we have a long historic attachment to the land. We have peasant roots. We were agricultural workers and small farmers.

**B**oth my parents were sharecroppers' children in North Carolina. They came from big families that had to work the land to eke out a bare subsistence. And, all of the hard economic times that they endured, while growing up in Ahoskee and Muffreesboro, North Carolina, were doubly hard because of the brutal system of Jim Crow—apartheid-U.S. style. Life was hard in the rural South and, despite the fact that during the '30s, some industry was developing, the system of legal second-class citizenship made earning a living and "getting ahead" a difficult prospect.

In our family, it was my mother who, as a young woman, decided to head north where things were "better." Her older brother Clyde

was in Philadelphia. He had left Muffreesboro in quite a hurry a few years earlier. As the story goes, the son of a plantation owner was made foreman of a newly opened factory in Muffreesboro, and he had the old habit of kicking the workers when he wanted to "get their attention." Most of these workers were poor, Black and white youth, fresh off the farm. One of them was my uncle Clyde, a big man with muscles to spare, who told his father, "I'm not going to allow them to kick me."

And so, one day, in the mid 30's, Uncle Clyde left for Philadelphia—it seems that, upon being kicked by this foreman, Uncle Clyde turned and grabbed him by the ankles and sent him flying across the room where he landed on his hind parts with a thump. I think he was injured somewhat. Uncle Clyde didn't stand around to see if he was or not. He was immediately surrounded by the Black workers, who covered for him while he ran a two-minute mile out of town—and, that's how he ended up in Philadelphia.

This is a lesson for the economic determinists. In some cases, the move from South to North was motivated by more than seeking a better life: it was also often motivated by the desire to save one's life.

Life was hard and dangerous in the rural South. My mother came to the North and my father, who was madly in love with her, soon followed to ask her hand in marriage. So, instead of my brother McCoy, myself and sister Gwendolyn being born in the towns of Ahoskee or Muffreesboro, North Carolina, we were born in the city of Philadelphia. After a family base had been established in the mid to late 30's to 40's, almost all of my aunts and uncles (about 18, all told) came north.

Most settled in Philadelphia and New York City. It's important to understand that what was happening to them was more than a change

in geography. In the process of their changing location, they were also changing their class. They became urbanized and proletarianized. Almost all of them started off doing domestic work, my mother trained and became a beautician—and so did three aunts and an uncle.

My father became a factory worker, as did several of my uncles. Some were in ship building and chemical production. Others became garment workers and healthcare workers. As children, my brothers and sister and all our twenty or so cousins in Philadelphia knew that one day we would be in a factory—at a “good job,” we hoped.

But life was not easy in the big city. We were poor by any standard. Racism prevailed, though it was not as severe as in the rural South. I know this because I often spent my summers in the South and I experienced the oppression from the greater poverty, restriction and terror. My cousins would continually caution me and my brother about our behavior. “You can’t do that,” they’d say, “You’re going to get in trouble.”

In Philadelphia, you had to be cautious also. The racism and the KKK were also present. Police terror and brutality regularly occurred in our segregated Black community. Mill Creek, in West Philadelphia, had its abundance of poor African-American folk just barely making it—struggling to keep a job, to keep the rent paid, food on the table and the bill collectors away from the door. In fact, one of the first skills I learned as a child was how to lie to the bill collectors.

This was the 1940s. The economic conditions in our community had not changed that much from the hard days of the depression. The Black communities of this nation had not gotten to the recovery phase. The reality of racist oppression made it possible for the economy to “recover” overall, while in the ghettos we remained in an economically depressed state. In 1959, when I graduated high school, there was a 27 percent unemployment rate among Afro-American youth—twice that of white youth.

I could not find the “good factory job” I was supposed to get or that “clean” white-collar job

they trained me for in my commercial courses in high school. I finally had to settle for a minimum-wage factory job—the kind of job working-class Black youth were “supposed” to get.

We felt that same disappointment, that was so strong among the Black veterans after World War II who came back looking for the work and equality that they deserved but couldn’t find. There built up in all of us a sense of injustice at the racism and the prospect that we could hardly do better than our parents. We knew a better life was out there for others. Why not for us? I had worked hard, earned my high school diploma—why such a lousy job?

The civil rights revolution of the ‘60s was fueled by just such feelings of unfulfilled expectations: feelings of anger at being denied. The cities were a boiling pot of dreams denied. So the civil rights upsurge swept the South and North. Martin Luther King articulated our visions of hope and Malcolm X vented our anger.

The root of the problem was the drive for super-profits from the super-exploitation of our people. The bad conditions at the factory and at home were derived from that drive. The intent of racist police terror we experienced was to prevent us from finding effective political responses to our plight. (I joined the Communist Party because it showed me those effective tactics and helped me see how to “fulfill the dream”.)

Some concessions were won during the ‘60s that combined with the continuing reforms from the New Deal. But the ‘70s and ‘80s saw a major push to take away all the democratic gains—government programs, job creation, medical care, civil rights legislation, anti-discrimination legislation, “Head Start” projects, educational reforms, etc.

Under Reagan, all the bad trends of the ‘50s and ‘70s were taken to a monumental level of out-and-out assault on the standard of living of the working class—with a lion’s share of the pain being borne by Black and other racially oppressed working people.

The working class, especially Afro-American workers, are largely concentrated in the big cities. The crisis of the cities is rooted in the cri-

sis of the system itself with its tendency for falling rates of profit, shrinking world markets, run-away shops, plant closings.

Reagan was trying to fulfill U.S. imperialism's dream of being top dog—to "roll back communism"—to gain "first strike nuclear superiority," etc. All of this dictated the most ruthless attack on the U.S. working class and, in a special way, against African-American working people.

New York is a case in point. The city has the largest Black population of any in the U.S., 1.8 million. Altogether, Blacks and Latinos comprise 48 percent of the city. Consequently, when we speak about the attack on New York City, we talk about the attack on African-American and Latino people.

The African-American population in the U.S. today is an urban population. In 1910, only 27 percent was urban—by 1950, it was 60 percent, and today, it is 85 percent. Ninety-six percent of Afro-Americans are working class and are equally distributed North and South.

These figures show why an attack on the cities is a special attack on the Afro-American people, why the crisis of the cities means a crisis of everyday living specially for them. This cannot be ignored nor played down in the struggle for liberation.

In New York City, as in other cities, the fiscal crisis was a class policy, engineered to lower the standard of living of the working class. It was not simply a problem of balancing the budget. The key thing was that big business planned to "balance the budget" on the backs of the working class and the racially oppressed.

That is why New York's Mayor, Ed Koch, is so consistently anti-working class and racist. His job is to be the cheer leader and propagandist of this effort to lower the standard of living of the working class.

Koch and Reagan's racist attack on minorities was designed to rationalize the shift of monies away from social programs that benefited the working class, and to vastly increase programs that enriched big business, i.e., massive military spending along with with a major tax

cut for the rich. They engineered the fiscal crisis. The big New York banks divested New York bonds and caused the crisis of confidence in the bond Market. They then used that crisis to force major concessions from the city and state government.

The many pro-monopoly measures taken by the Koch, Cuomo and Reagan Administrations, set the stage for the massive boom that took place on Wall Street. The 5-year bull market resulted in the accumulation of great wealth. One saw high-priced, high-rise office buildings and co-op apartments going up—whole areas transformed from neighborhoods of working class, of Black and Latino families, to high-priced gentrified upper class and middle strata communities.

The era of the yuppies descended, and what a price was paid. Homelessness, hunger, unemployment, neighborhood decay—all reached epidemic proportions. The only thing that grew faster than poverty, was drug addiction which served to pacify and dehumanize its victims in order to undermine the possibility of a united working-class political response.

While Wall Street boomed, the Black and Latino communities remained in a deep, depressed state. The cuts in social services were cuts in human lives; not just bookkeeping.

In Harlem, the infant mortality rate grew to 27.6 per thousand births, 3 times the national rate and more than twice the rate in N.Y.C. as a whole.

There are thousands of abandoned build-Kongings while homelessness and hunger prevail. There is a drug epidemic that's destroying thousands of youth—taking away their innocence, their hope and their lives. Overall, in New York City, 33 percent of all Afro-Americans and 42 percent of its Puerto Rican people live in dire poverty with not enough to eat, insufficient clothing, lack of medical care, bad housing, and a generally unhealthy environment.

Public schools remain under-funded, under-staffed, under-supplied and uninspiring. We have a 60 percent drop-out rate among Afro-American and Latino youth who constitute the

majority of the public school student body. Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins 903recently noted that "the lives of 1,800 Afro-Americans could be saved a year if health care in the Black community was equal to the level of care that whites receive."

Then there is the rise of racist violence. The city's Human Rights Commission reports the doubling of acts of racist violence from 253 in 1986 to 458 in 1987. There have been numerous incidents from Bernhard Goetz, Howard Beach to Bensonhurst. Police murders are also growing. The latest case is that of Juan Rodriguez, a Dominican, who was beaten to death by city police.

The string of cases extending from Eleanor Bumpers to Arnold Perry, Michael Stewart, Nicolas Bartles and Yvonne Smallwood; all constitute a terrible pattern of government-condoned racist violence. That racist violence is designed to terrorize its victims, but it's also designed to produce a reaction that will lead to a Black, white, and Latino split that will render the working class defenseless.

This is all very much related to a widespread and highly profitable system of segregated housing. Certain areas are set aside for Black and Latino people to reside where the highest rents are paid for the lowest quality housing. Other areas systematically exclude racial minorities. The real-estate capitalists make a bonanza on such segregation.

The City, State and Federal governments have virtually abandoned enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. The same pattern exists in education, jobs and healthcare. With 40 percent of all children and over 50 percent of all African-American children living in poverty, it's time for the greatest unity of action.

**A**ll of these conditions existed during the "boom time." We learned much from this period of 'so-called prosperity. Antiworking class and racist policies of government made it possible for conditions of "boom" and "depression" to simultaneously exist in a city. Racism was the key factor. Jobs were created, but they didn't go to New York City's Black and Latino

people. Unemployment remained high in the ghettos and barrios. New buildings went up, but they didn't provide housing for the Black community.

What have the people of Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant and South Jamaica to do with \$200,000 co-ops? What they need is quality low income public housing.

Homelessness grew in the middle of a "building boom." New private medical facilities were built, but public hospitals were closed and Black people's health deteriorated. Private schools grew, but public schools deteriorated.

And, what about "trickle down"? The rich made money and didn't invest it where it would help people. They invested it to where they could make the most profit possible. They bought condos, limos, jewels, vacation homes and drugs. The rich made it. They kept it! They forgot to "trickle."

We learned something from this past period. You can't make poor folks better off by pump-priming rich folks. Experience shows rich folks, by their nature, only feel responsible for one thing: making money for themselves. And, providing jobs for poor folks doesn't make money for them.

Now, after the Stock Market crash, New York City is plunging deeper into crisis. Already, new cuts in social services have been proposed. To show how they're going to operate, we can look at what happened last week. Koch pulled a "coup" in Brownsville, Brooklyn. He closed a firehouse by calling a false alarm (which is illegal). While the firefighters were away, the firehouse was closed down and boarded up. 5,000 firefighters demonstrated at City Hall protesting this and other planned cuts.

Like the firefighters, the people's forces must mobilize to see to it that this round of fiscal crisis is met by making the rich pay. They didn't give voluntarily during the last round of cut-backs, so it's necessary to tax them! Make them pay. Make them provide the bucks for a massive program of rebuilding New York City for the working people and oppressed, and help to provide tens of thousands of jobs.

**R**ecently, Koch's Commission on the Year 2000 issued its report. It proposed more pump-priming for the rich at the expense of the working class and racially oppressed. Tax giveaways to the rich and social cutbacks to the poor would continue, even on a grander scale. The "commissioners" bragged about how New York City's wages have become competitive and that it now has a more attractive climate for business. It showed that they are not going to be satisfied until the wage levels in New York City are comparable to the wages in rural Mississippi, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Africa.

It is clear that the drafters of the report see the pattern of unemployment, under-employment, homelessness and poverty continuing because they offer no program to meet these problems. All they suggest, in typical Moynihan, Glasser, Thomas Sowell fashion, is various blame-the-victim schemes aimed at "changing the habits of the poor."

The report doesn't deal with racism, which means that, although New York City will be majority Black, Latino and Asian by the year 2000, they reporters see its racist policies of government remaining.

The planners see rents rising with only the most minimal programs to build low-income housing being put into effect. Over 60,000 abandoned units of housing now owned by the city are to be turned back to private real estate interests for profit. Warehousing of apartments (10,000 units in all) will still be allowed and homelessness will continue to grow.

The subways will have only one operator per train, and train stations will be totally unstaffed, causing big cuts in transit workers' jobs. Preventive maintenance will not yet be instituted. Fares will continue to increase and, at the rate they have been rising, a \$2 to \$3 fare could be in effect by the year 2000.

To handle the crime problem, the commission offers an idea right out of the manuals of apartheid South Africa—house arrest. This would serve two purposes: for poor and political activists, this can be a way of mass jailing—like robots, they will be monitored by electrical

devices attached to their bodies. The wealthy convicts, on the other hand, would be confined to their own luxury homes rather than the brutal, dehumanizing prisons that the racially oppressed and the poor must endure.

This proposal would expand the dual "system of justice"—a system that discriminates on the basis of class and race.

The report also calls for a greater centralization of government power in the hands of the mayor and it further undermines the power of the City Council. Conceived in the name of more efficiency, it facilitates greater control. It projects the ruling class' view of the year 2000.

**T**he working class view, may be found in the reports to the 23rd National and the New York Conventions of the Communist Party, USA, which outline a program that puts people first.

We believe there is a way out of the crisis of the cities.

We believe, given the proper level of unity, organization and action, the back of racism can be broken!

Since the early days of U.S. capitalism, the African-American people occupy a critical position in the total economic, political and social scheme of things in our country.

The African-American people are a racial minority, but a minority whose liberation is in the interest of the majority. Martin Luther King understood this well. Jesse Jackson is tapping this principle in his campaign.

Henry Winston, late chairman of the CPUSA, was so accurate, when he pointed out that "class interest" was a more accurate term than "self interest" when talking about why white workers will struggle against racism.

Saving the cities from monopolies' plunder will benefit all working people. It's in their class interest.

The 30 million African-American people are overwhelmingly working class. They constitute a strategic sector of the working class as a whole. They are proportionately more unionized (as are Latino workers), but are to be found disproportionately among those facing

the sharpest point of the anti-labor attack.

African-American workers are among the most militant working-class fighters. They have never rejected unity with other peoples. Black-white-Latino-Asian-Native/American/Indian unity is a living, accepted concept among the masses of African-American working people. Despite all attempts on the part of the racist ruling class to disunite, masses of Black people throughout history have understood that this was a formula for victory.

Go-it-alone-ism, "Black-only" strategies, separatism, "race war" concepts have never won majority acceptance among Afro-Americans because they don't correspond to their real interest of the oppressed. Life has shown that the greatest advances against racism have come when there was the greatest unity.

Here in New York State the ranks of organized workers have been growing. In 1984, there were 2.36 million; by 1986, it rose to 2.4 million or almost 35 percent of the eligible workforce in our state. Only one state has a higher level of unionization—Michigan with 35.6 percent.

In New York, African-American and Latino workers have a higher rate of unionization than white workers. As trade unionists they are the most militant opponents of the ruling class as well as fighters for unity. Over 40 percent of all eligible African-American workers in New York State are in unions.

Black workers' experience in life brings to the fore the question of unity which includes unionization. The labor movement in our country remains a powerful political and economic force, despite weaknesses.

The presence of so many African-American workers in the ranks of organized labor and the

common class interest of workers as a whole makes it necessary for the labor movement to be involved in the struggle against racism, and the crisis of the cities. Experience has shown that when labor shies from this fight it loses ground everywhere.

**B**lack people constitute a racial minority but they are a strategic and inseparable part of the working class majority. The fight for racial equality is inexorably linked with the fight for economic justice and world peace and to save the cities. This fight can be won and will be won through class unity—Black-white unity, in the first place

Back in the early 1900s, African-Americans were starting their mass influx to the cities of the North and South. They were seeking a better life, a relief from the oppressive conditions of the Jim Crow rural South.

When my Uncle Clyde, my mother and father, aunts and uncles and millions of Black people entered the ranks of the urban working class, they did not put aside their struggle for equality. They brought that with them into the working class, and subsequently into the trade union movement. It blended with the hopes and desires, and the sufferings of working people of all nationalities and races.

The fight against the racist oppression of the largely urban 30 million African-American people is a critical part of the fight against the effects of the crisis of the cities. This struggle goes to the heart of the fight against the evil of capitalism. United with their class brothers and sisters the African-American people can and will win! □

# The Trade Unions Today In the Fight for Equality

BOBBIE RABINOWITZ

Greetings to the assembled participants, guests, speakers and organizers of this important conference. I come here not so much as a scholar or a theoretician but as an activist on the front line within the trade union movement. I would like to present, today, a report on the activities of my trade union in dealing with the question of racism and its striving for equality: the unfinished agenda.

The two great social movements of our time, the trade union movement and the movement for Afro-American equality, are coming closer together. The assaults on the living standards and working conditions of Americans by the Reagan Administration, and the current crisis of the capitalist economy are creating conditions that make unity, not just desirable but necessary.

The April 25th March for Peace and Justice, the Jobs with Justice demonstrations and the planned labor-civil rights march through the South, are important reflections of the growth of this unity.

In union after union and plant after plant, Black-white unity and labor-Afro-American unity are coming to the forefront and affecting all social questions. This is in evidence in the work of my own trade union.

I am an officer of a 14,000-member public sector union, municipal employees in the social services. The union is affiliated with District Council 37, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees and the AFL-CIO. The members are a multi-ethnic group, predominantly Black, Hispanic and white. The coalition with which I was elected, was formed to represent all ethnic groups in the union. Its makeup was the result of a conscious effort to select a balance of four women and four men, giving women equal representation, and with Black and Hispanic representation equaling that of white.

I was asked to join this slate as a represen-

tative of a large, lobbying group within the union, that of social workers with masters' degrees, comprising about 10 percent of the total membership. I had organized a campaign to obtain an educational salary differential for this group of workers. I would say that the effort to create a coalition and a slate balanced in this way is very unusual in the trade union movement and needs to be emulated elsewhere.

As the vice president of publicity and community relations, I work closely with the editor of our union paper, *The Unionist*, to ensure press coverage of campaigns for equality and against racism locally, nationally and internationally.

Through the available union media, we try to portray union officers, staff and members in a unified light, working together in the struggle for workers' rights, equality, peace and against racism. The reaction from our membership to our newspaper, our newsletter, and our union tape-recordings has been 99 percent positive.

The union's members work in settings such as shelters for the homeless, city hospitals, income maintenance centers, day care centers, senior citizens centers, in foster care and adoption, protective and child abuse areas. They work with the mentally ill, mentally retarded, disabled, handicapped in medicaid offices and other social service settings.

Broadly speaking, they deal with the effects of the structural problems of the capitalist system on the individuals who are affected by it: the homeless, unemployed, the ill, the abused, the poverty stricken citizens of our city. Within the union setting, solutions to the crises facing the clients as well as the problems faced by the union members are dealt with by the leadership.

The bloated military budget directly affects the level of services. It results in inadequate services for the people and inadequate salaries for social service workers. Understaffing causes



burdensome working conditions. Unsafe and hazardous conditions at the worksite must always be fought. Within the union, issues that pertain to the struggle for equality arise daily.

### **STRUGGLES AGAINST RACISM**

Four years ago, our union mounted a campaign to organize and annualize "per diem" institutional aides in the shelter system. These workers were paid by the day even though they worked regularly. Primarily Black and Hispanic, this group of employees was the most brutalized, in the sense that they, as per diem workers, had no job security, no benefits, no overtime, no sick time, no welfare benefits nor pension rights. Some of them were former shelter residents, and all were greatly exploited.

The union fought a successful battle to annualize these workers, to force the administration to give them the same rights as full-time workers after being on staff permanently for one year. This entitled them to annual leave, sick leave, welfare and educational fund benefits, disability and pension rights. In short it gave them full labor citizenship.

Other struggles by the union to protect the rights of minorities include allowing workers who, because of the pressures of life imposed on them, could not fulfill the needed formal educational requirements for higher titles, to qualify for these based on job experience. This was done while still preserving the opportunity to complete the formal educational requirements.

As conditions are now, because of lack of equal opportunity, minorities are often locked into unskilled jobs, while the skilled jobs are preserved for whites.

We do not want lack of educational opportunities to result in resegregation in the workplace.

Blacks and whites working together in unions have a unique opportunity for building unity, which is often not available in other settings due to housing and education patterns of separation. In the union setting, Blacks and whites have an opportunity to work as allies for the same goals.

This phenomenon was noted by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., over twenty years ago, when

he wrote,

Negroes make up nearly 20 percent of the organized work force, although they are only ten percent of the general population. This potential strength is magnified further by the fact of their unity with millions of white workers in these occupations. As co-workers there is a basic community of interest that transcends many of the ugly divisive elements of traditional prejudice. There are undeniable points of friction, but the severity of the abrasions is minimized by the more commanding need for cohesion in union organizations.

Our union has worked in larger coalitions on major issues pertaining to the elimination of racism worldwide as well as at home.

On the theory that no worker can be free in the U.S. while others are enslaved, as in apartheid South Africa, our union has been active since the early struggles for divestment. We were instrumental in having the New York City Council initiate its policy of divesting from companies which do business with South Africa. We are also instrumental in having a bill introduced forbidding the city from purchasing products made by companies which do business in South Africa. We have worked actively with the New York Area Labor Committee Against Apartheid for five years and support its campaigns and activities.

We are active supporters of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). One of our union activists sits on its executive committee. We support and participate in the activities of the legislative caucuses of Black and Hispanic legislators on the state and national levels.

It has always been the policy of our union in contract negotiations to raise entry-level salaries as much as possible. This was especially important because these salaries were extremely low for many years and the entry-level people were increasingly Black, Hispanic and other racial minorities.

A strong civil service law assists the elimination of racism by making hiring and promotions solely dependent upon merit. In our setting, a strong trade union which supports a strong civil service system is the best guarantee that minorities will be treated fairly and that pa-

tronage, cronyism, corruption and discrimination will be at a minimum.

The concept of affirmative action is supported by our union. Sex discrimination often turns out to be another way in which minorities are underrepresented, as the women in the lower paid titles are predominantly Black and Hispanic and are the first to benefit by successful affirmative action suits.

### **CIVIL SERVICE & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Civil service law represents a modicum of formal equality. However, sometimes the civil service system and the seniority system clash with the principle of affirmative action. Affirmative action, where it is negotiated, stands as a powerful tool in the fight against racism. Where Blacks and whites have fought together, unions are stronger.

Unions such as ours and District Council 37, which is now headed by a Black labor leader, Stanley Hill, a former president of our local, show how Black and white workers can join together successfully. DC 37 organizes annual events in honor of Black History Month, in which union members, Black and white, participate.

Our unions, in New York City, also led in organizing for the most recent rallies and demonstrations for peace and justice.

The April 19th protest also called for an end to racist violence at home and abroad and an end to the arms race.

Our local was one of the first to oppose the Vietnam war and was in the forefront of the labor support for the nuclear-free harbor campaign.

Our workers, AFSCME members, marched side by side in Memphis, Tennessee with Martin Luther King, supporting the Memphis sanitation workers, also AFSCME members, in their struggle for dignity and equality.

We can only do these things by working in a coalition which understands that all of these issues are closely related.

### **TASKS FOR THE LABOR MOVEMENT**

What can the labor movement do to make an even greater contribution to the struggle for equality?

- We must educate our members constantly about the importance of taking stands on issues which some might consider not directly related to the immediate work of a union.

- We must educate all workers about the evils of apartheid in South Africa and mobilize opposition to incidents of racism at home.

- We must fight for more affirmative action agreements in union contracts and support studies of sex discrimination such as the one currently negotiated by DC 37.

- Progressive trade unionism has become a powerful force within the organized trade union movement—the AFL-CIO, and the Central Labor Council in New York City and we must continue to project initiatives through the Labor Committee for Peace, the Labor Committee Against Apartheid, the Committee Against Intervention in Central America, the National Alliance Against Racial and Political Repression.

- The labor movement must go on record in strong support of proposed legislation to combat racist acts with stricter penalties.

- We must support the outlawing of the Ku Klux Klan.

- And we must do all of this without neglecting the daily needs of the workers in the worksite.

It is important to offer union members an opportunity to learn about other social systems, how ethnic groups live and work together under socialism, how trade unions function in other societies. It is important for union members to understand that peace in the world will come only through knowledge and understanding of people with different social systems.

This understanding means rejecting the official AFL-CIO position of discouraging interaction with trade unionists from the socialist world or with the militant World Federation of Trade Unions. The travel ban has got to go.

There is a long anti-racist agenda to complete. But if we all work together we can do it!

# Jobs for Afro-Americans: A High Priority on the Equality Agenda

VICTOR PERLO

There are 60 million racially and nationally oppressed people in the United States, the largest number in any country. Of these, 32 million are Afro-American, and they are the most oppressed.

By the middle and late 1980s, minority peoples were majorities in many central cities, and minority children were large majorities in public schools. This population concentration has contributed to the election of a number of Afro-American mayors and members of Congress. At the same time, there has been a process of ghettoizing minorities, with mainly-white populations enjoying generally higher living standards in surrounding areas and suburbs. Because of higher birth rates and immigration, the proportion of minority people in the total population is rising rapidly.

The struggle is for complete effective equality, including the right to integrate all spheres of life. It is the responsibility of the white majority to join in and aid the fight against racism. It is in the interest of that majority to do so.

The classic statement of Karl Marx that the white worker cannot be free while his Black brother remains enchained is fully valid today. In basic economics, this means that fewer and poorer jobs, lower wages, inferior social benefits and poor working and living conditions imposed on Black people are used as levers to undermine the standards of all workers, to prevent the unity of the working class, thereby critically weakening it in the conflict with capital.

Racism is a class phenomenon. The Chinese, brought to this country to build the railroads and develop California's agriculture, were subjected to vile slander, to the myth of the "Yellow Menace." But the Japanese bankers and industrialists who come to the United States to invest, to exploit U.S. workers, are treated as equals and partners, if also as rivals.

More than any other race or ethnic group,

Blacks are overwhelmingly members of the working class. What gains have been won were achieved through generations of struggle, in which Communists played a major part. The anti-fascist character of World War II helped some, and especially important were the civil rights actions that peaked in the 1960s.

But many of the gains have evaporated. Black people lack day-to-day security in civilian life. In a country with one of the highest crime rates in the world, Afro-Americans are five times as likely to be murdered as whites, and are subject to beatings and killings by police and gangs. Roughly half the inmates of jails and prisons are Black as a result of rampant discrimination throughout the entire legal system.

Discrimination against Blacks is a source of huge super-profits. In 1984 the per capita income of Blacks was 42 per cent below that of whites. The per capita income differential of \$5,140 totalled \$164 billion, based on the estimated 32 million Afro-American people. The total differential against all oppressed peoples came to \$291 billion.

The economic gains of Afro-Americans crested in 1970, close to the peak in the overall fortunes of the U.S. working class. Then, Black family incomes were more than 61 per cent of median white family incomes. But by 1986 the ration was down to 57 percent, and if corrections are made to offset changes in the method used by the Census Bureau in counting, it would have been 55 percent.

The official poverty rate for Black people is 31 percent, almost three times the 11 percent rate for whites. Losses of the U.S. working class, and special losses of the Black people, coincide with the structural crisis of the U.S. economy, with the capitalist offensive against labor and with the aggressive racism of the Reagan administration.

The downtrend was most marked in the

North, as many Afro-Americans, to escape the most extreme forms of racism, migrated from the South to find jobs in industry. And in the North, losses were greatest in areas where industry deteriorated most.

In the Midwest "rust bowl," the losses were most tragic—from 76 percent of white family income in 1969 to 51 per cent in 1953—representing a catastrophic decline in real income of about one-third, impoverishing Black families in the industrial heartland of the country.

### THE CURRENT JOB SITUATION

The fight for jobs, for good jobs, is a central theme of the Black liberation struggle.

Officially-admitted Black unemployment in 1982 reached 26 percent in Chicago; 34 percent in Detroit; 24 percent in Cleveland; and 26 percent in Pittsburgh—in general more than two and a half times the intolerably high level of unemployment among white workers.

Nationally, Black unemployment declined from a peak of 19.5 percent in 1983 to 13.0 percent in 1987, still well above the average rate in all decades between World War II and Reagan's takeover of the presidency. Moreover, the Black unemployment rate in 1987 was 2.5 times the 5.3 percent rate for white workers, compared with a usual "pre-Reagan" ratio of 2.0 times. And in a major Midwest industrial city, Milwaukee, the Black unemployment rate was still 27 percent (*Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 26, 1988).

Undercounting Black unemployment is especially marked in establishment sources. Special note must be made of the extra discrimination, in this respect, against Black males. A million Black men, most of whom are unemployed, are simply not counted. Moreover, discrimination in the kinds of jobs available, and in wages, is especially marked with respect to Black men. This has a serious impact on family and is an important factor in the relatively large proportion of single Black mothers, and on the triple burden they carry.

The wage differentials between white men and Black men are much larger than that between white women and Black women—although of course both white and Black women,

for the most part, receive poverty-level wages.

The anti-union drive of big business has been most harmful to Black workers. The decline in the percentage of workers in unions, already rapid in the late 1970s, has accelerated during the Reagan years.

Black workers were and are among the most militant in organizing unions. Gains of workers from union membership are most pronounced, but the union/non-union wage advantage, in dollars and in percentages, are higher for Black and Hispanic workers than for white workers. White union members, on the average make about one-third more than unorganized workers; Black and Hispanic unionists make about one-half more than those not in unions. Moreover, the economic sectors with the highest percentage of Black workers—transport, communications and utilities, and public administration are also the ones with the highest percentage of union membership.

These facts support two general conclusions. The organized working class, despite serious shortcomings in leadership, is the main social force in the struggle against racism. Simultaneously, Afro-American workers are among the most class-conscious, and make a more-than-proportional contribution to the struggles of the entire working class for a better life. Thus, the anti-labor offensive of the Reagan Administration and of the employers is bound to their racist offensive.

The Reagan Administration has actively striven to wipe out the affirmative action programs so essential if gains against job discrimination are to be made. The government agencies supposed to combat racism are used, instead, to reinforce racism. The "Injustice Department" of Attorney General Meese not only sees no racist evil but tries to maintain and intensify racism whenever it is can.

Then there is the the grave assault on the basic physical liberties of Black people. It is a salient part of the overall offensive against human rights and of the neo-fascist tendencies toward a police state. Between 1979 and 1986, the number of people imprisoned increased 82 percent. By 1986, 3 million people were imprisoned, on pa-

role or probation.

The imprisonment of Blacks, relatively, is three times that of the population generally. About one out of every 10 adult Black males is deprived of freedom, including those on parole or probation. About 12 million people are arrested yearly, and a disproportionate number are Black. Executions of Blacks are on the rise, often on frame-up charges.

The number of Americans actually in prison or jail approximates 750,000, which is five times the combined total for the United Kingdom, West Germany and France, and three times the total for all Western Europe, which has a considerably larger population than the United States.

There are more Black and Hispanic people in U.S. prisons and jails than the total number of imprisoned people in Western Europe. And the number imprisoned increases as rapidly as authorities can build more prisons and increase crowding in existing facilities.

The large number of Black males with arrest records is a terrible handicap in seeking employment, and especially in seeking good, full-time jobs. The entire system of education and training is geared to keeping Afro-Americans out of the better jobs with opportunities for advancement (a growing sector) and to limiting them to dead end jobs whose availability is shrinking.

#### THE JOB PROSPECTS WORSEN

Black workers held nearly 10 percent of all jobs in 1985, according to U.S. Department of Labor Statistics. That agency listed the 11 occupations with the fastest growth prospects and the 10 occupations with the prospect of the deepest decline over the coming ten years. About 5 million workers were employed in each of these groups of occupations. There were only 315,000 Afro-Americans, or 6.4 percent of the total, in the jobs with fast growth prospects. But there were 812,000 Blacks, or 16.5 percent of the total in the jobs destined to decline. (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987, pp. 384-386.)

These figures deliver an ominous message. If left to the capitalist "free enterprise" system, employment of Black workers will deteriorate

seriously, by the year 2000.

Here's another way of looking at the same problem. In 1985 the U.S. Department of Commerce projected the possible pattern of employment well into the next century. The projections were for major industry groups and for states, regions and metropolitan areas or cities. (1985 OBERs, Bureau of Economic Analysis. *Survey of Employment Prospects Through 2035*.) The BEA experts foresaw only a slow, uncertain growth for manufacturing, the sector of most job gains of Black workers during the World War II and post-war decades.

Already, over the past ten years, Black workers have suffered disproportionately from the net drop in manufacturing production worker employment. Thus, the negative prospect for manufacturing is serious, indeed, for them. And the perspective becomes more grave when we look at the statistics for cities of concentrated Afro-American population. Let's consider a few of them, remembering that the population statistics are for 1980, and Black population percentages have risen in these cities since then:

**Chicago**—40 percent Black; manufacturing jobs projected to decline from 773,000 in 1978 to 504,000 in 2035, with most of the drop by the year 2000.

**New York**—25 percent Black, 19 percent Hispanic; manufacturing jobs projected to drop from 640,000 to 383,000.

**Newark, N.J.**—58 percent Black; factory jobs expected to fall from 227,000 to 188,000.

**Detroit**—63 percent Black; manufacturing jobs in the erstwhile auto capital expected to decline one-third, from 616,000 to 416,000.

Let's contrast these examples with an opposite one:

**Silicon Valley**—with its burgeoning high-tech industry, San Jose, California has a Black population of 5 percent, Hispanic 22 percent; manufacturing employment is expected to more than double, from 203,000 to 472,000.

But for minority workers who hope to take advantage of new job opportunities—how can they afford the sky-high housing costs?

So let's examine the high-tech complex,

which has been expanding most rapidly, and is expected to continue to grow at a priority rate with its growth rate looming ever more important as its base expands.

The Labor Department reports show that Blacks have 6.6 percent of the jobs in the computer manufacturing industry, and 5.1 percent of the jobs in computer and data processing servicing. Production of instruments and related products was projected to double in the 20-odd years after 1978, the fastest growth rate for any group of manufacturing industries. Blacks have 4.2 percent of the jobs in scientific and controlling instruments, the key sector of this group; 7.2 percent of the jobs in aircraft; 5.9 percent in guided missiles, space vehicles and parts.

The production of these industries is largely for the military. It follows that generals who direct racist wars in developing countries are linked with and take jobs as corporate executives in companies which have racist employment policies.

Manufacturing industries can grow as fast or faster under conditions of disarmament and a peace economy but the potential for the civilian space program has been choked by the Reagan Administration which has also refused cooperation with the USSR in this field.

Aside from manufacturing, relatively high-paying industrial sectors are slated for rapid growth. Employment in the oil and gas industry is expected to double, but Black workers have only 5 percent of the jobs. Construction is slated for a 40 percent increase, and should go up much more with the proper planning. But, as of 1986, Blacks had only 6.8 percent of the jobs, and generally the poorer jobs.

On the other hand, government employment is projected to expand very little, less than population growth. Afro-Americans hold 14.3 percent of the jobs in public administration, so their situation will worsen if government employment opportunities decline. Why is it possible for Blacks to get more government jobs, relatively, than private jobs? Fundamentally, because it is more difficult to carry out racist policies in government offices where actions are subject to public review and where there is less

direct personal profit interest in racism on the part of officials.

All in all, the data indicate clearly that if matters are left to develop as they have, the employment situation of Afro-Americans will not improve but will deteriorate further.

But history never moves in so straight a line. Conditions are bound to be influenced by the struggles of people, especially of Afro-Americans along with the entire working class, in unity with peace forces and with the majority of the American people who oppose the policies of the ruling class. It is that majority which strives for a more decent, more just life, for economic and social security for all.

### PROGRAM

Let us consider some specific objectives to improve the employment scene for Afro-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and, indeed inevitably, all workers.

To start with an easy one—How is it that government employment as a whole, which over a long historical span became increasingly significant as a percentage of total employment, is projected to decline in relative importance in coming decades?

The Commerce Department professionals who made the projections assumed that existing trends would continue and that there would be no change from the Reagan Administration policies of: (a) slashing all socially valuable programs and (b) "privatizing"—turning useful and productive public properties and resources over to private profiteers.

Any administration, even a moderately progressive one, will reverse Reaganism in this respect and move to restore and improve the abandoned social services, which are needed more than ever, and add new procedures that have become necessary. Such a change in direction can, and must, be won. And with a new and updated program, the tendency for government employment to drop will be reversed. Education, child care, health, environmental protection, public works and housing construction and maintenance will all accelerate.

This will improve job prospects for workers

generally, but especially for Afro-Americans. This is true, particularly when the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission becomes—as it must and was always supposed to be, but never was—an effective well-staffed organization with a broadened Congressional mandate and with staff having a will to exercise it. To make serious dents in discrimination, to achieve genuine equality in job opportunity and actuality will require tens of thousands of field agents to supervise the activities of hundreds of thousands of employers.

Affirmative action application is essential. Affirmative action policies to be implemented and enforced include:

- Use of positive quotas as the main instrument, with time limits to achieve equality in overall employment, and at higher skill, rank and pay levels.

- Quotas should cover sufficiently broad geographical areas so as to make it impossible for employers to escape by moving to all-white sections. When plants in such areas are involved, provision of equal employment must include government financing for travel expenses for Black workers, as well as moving costs to the plant's locale where adequate nearby housing must be provided.

Disarmament and reconversion will be crucial factors in obtaining job equality. The conversion of munitions plants—conspicuous discriminators against Black workers—to peaceful production will facilitate the struggle for fair employment. Disarmament and detente will undercut the chauvinism and racism of the militarized foreign policy; will eliminate the psychological impetus to racism involved in Reaganite, cold war foreign policies.

Big business sectors and even some corporate representatives in the Administration are urging the resumption and expansion of trade with socialist countries. And, when nuclear disarmament becomes a reality, there will be no basis for economic warfare against the USSR, opening up vast untapped markets for U.S. manufactures, high-tech products and services, and major capital projects. The employment potential is very large, indeed.

Likewise is the potential that will emerge with the defeat of the U.S. imperialist drive for global military domination and corporate plunder of the Third World. This is essential for the implementation of the UN New World Economic Order, which provides for the development of Latin America, Africa and much of Asia. And reversed would be the need for developing countries to have big trade surpluses with the United States in order to pay interest on loans and profits on direct investments. The export of jobs would end, and many new opportunities would be created to supply the development needs of the Third World.

Various formulas have been advanced to restrict the activities of transnational corporations. While the U.S. trade deficit has broken the world's record, the TNCs are at least in balance in their foreign trade, taking into account sales from their foreign plants. If there were a ban on the runaway shop, and if TNCs were required to return to the United States a reasonable part of their production meant for U.S. markets, the U.S. trade deficit would end. And, again, there would be more jobs in industry, more jobs for Afro-American workers.

Still another point: revival of the struggle for a 35-hour workweek without reduction in pay is long overdue. This would mean 10 million additional jobs and doubling the far-below-poverty-level minimum wage. Black workers have a special stake in this issue, especially in the wage factor.

The repeal of anti-labor legislation and revival of the NLRB, in its original form and function, is important in that it gives workers an official structure with which to challenge corporate-controlled courts.

We need a unified, major, union organizing campaign to establish the power base that will win many of these changes and, especially, improve the situation of Black workers. But, of course, most unions themselves need to strengthen their anti-discrimination programs and struggles; all vestiges of racist discrimination that persist in a number of unions must be eliminated.

## **AFRO-AMERICANS & HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES**

In the struggle for job equality, there is no more important sector of the economy than its high-tech components. Computer specialists say that, from their observation, exclusion of Blacks from significant jobs in the computer field is almost total, considerably worse than suggested by government statistics. The following excerpt from a letter written to the organization "Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility" speaks for itself.

I have been a computer professional for twenty years. I have worked in several different locations, and attended trade shows and meetings with thousands of other computer professionals. In this period, I have seen or met so few Black or Hispanic professionals that I can only conclude that the racist discrimination which has excluded members of these groups from so many occupations has been extended to computing as well. This is inexcusable for a number of reasons:

1 • The growth of the computer profession has occurred precisely in the decades of the civil rights movement, when affirmative action programs to eliminate discrimination have come to be widely applied in the United States.

2 • There has been a continuing demand for more computer professionals, which makes it possible to implement affirmative action and training programs without an impression of "competition" for the jobs.

3 • More than in other fields, many computer professionals get most of their training on the job. Lack of formal education should, therefore, be less of a barrier in this profession than in others.

This writer calls on the organization to develop programs to end racial discrimination in the industry. Certainly all companies that produce, program or service computers should be required to enforce affirmative action programs, with strong minimum quota provisions and time controls.

Such programs should include training on the job to the extent necessary. Also important is provision for commuter facilities and housing near the computer establishments. Even more

than most, these relatively new industries are located far from inner city concentrations of Afro-Americans. Distance from central Boston, e.g., should no longer be an excuse to exclude Black Bostonians from good jobs in the Route 128 high-tech circuit.

To ensure implementation of such programs, federal financing, with Congressional appropriation of needed funds, would be required.

Far out? I don't think so. The total cost of these programs would be a fraction of the savings that could result from ratification of the INF Treaty and the follow-up 50 percent reduction in strategic arms. Employment in the construction industry should continue to rise, at least at the significant pace projected by the Commerce Department. But to be effective, in terms of good jobs for workers and in terms of the kind of structures that are built, a major expansion of government construction projects is required.

There is a backlog of needed construction, in most communities, of large-scale unemployment, carrying out these projects would provide jobs for most of those who are out of work, especially the male unemployed. Private capitalists do not and will not finance such construction. Needless to say, union wages and conditions should be supplied, and affirmative action programs applied, including quotas for the most skilled, highly paid occupations.

Obsolete, long apprentice programs, where they still exist, are a screen for cronyism and keeping jobs within "the family"! This has to be fought, in the interest of all construction workers, white as well as Black.

As for service industries, they will increase more rapidly than commodity-producing industries. And many more service industries are needed, even though some are parasitic—such as advertising, most financial activities, etc.

Consider the current racism in one of the most vital service industries, health. Here we are dealing with salary ranges of from 10-20 to one. Moreover, in a racist environment, the lack of Black physicians and registered nurses, especially in central cities where Afro-Americans predominate, has much to do with the lower life



expectancy, higher infant mortality, and generally poorer health of the people.

A crash program, wholly government financed, is vital to train 60,000 Black physicians, 10,000 Black dentists, and corresponding numbers of highly qualified Black registered nurses and other key medical personnel. The cost of such a program, including living expenses for the students, would be somewhere around \$10 billion, or \$2 billion a year over a five-year education and training period for the physicians, and appropriate periods for other categories.

That's what the CIA and Pentagon spend for their racist wars against Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Afghanistan.

Affirmative action programs, to be fully effective, have to begin at birth, continue through 100 percent publicly financed, child care pro-

grams for working parents, then to the assignment of top teachers for schools with large percentages of Black pupils—and provision of good, up-to-date, adequate equipment. In this modern world, such schools should provide a computer for every pupil. And similar provisions should be extended throughout high school, college and graduate school, with the allocation of required public funding to ensure that no person, Black or white, is denied the education which he or she is capable of achieving.

Obviously this is a huge program. It will not be won overnight. It is a program that will surely be adopted in a socialist United States of Americamerica. But the struggle to obtain the maximum part of this program, before that revolutionary change, is on the order of the day.

---

**CORRECTION:** The editors, in "The Communist 'Plus' at Work" by Joelle Fishman, (February 1988) incorrectly identified the club under discussion as the author's own.

---

# reprints from the soviet press

**Compass Point Publications**  
P.O. Box 20673, New York, NY 10025

Enclosed please find my check/money order for \$30, payable to Compass Point Publications, Inc., for a one year subscription to *Soviet Reprints*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

A semi-monthly journal in English of current articles, speeches, documents and reports from the original sources. All material is unabridged and carefully translated, providing Soviet points of view on a full range of topics, including:

**Economics • Politics •  
Foreign Affairs • Law •  
Labor • Agriculture •  
Industry • Science •  
The Unfolding Process of  
Perestroika and Glasnost**

An annual subscription of 24 issues is \$30 (for individuals only).

# Black Representation, the Labor Movement and the 1988 Elections

A roundtable discussion

The following are excerpts from a roundtable discussion on Black political representation and the 1988 elections.

Participating in the discussion: Raglan George, VP, Local 1-3, Fur, Leather & Machine, UFCW; Cecilia McCall, National staff, Women and Racial & Economic Equality; Gus Newport, former mayor of Berkeley California; Kay Tillow VP, 1199P, National Union of Hospital and Health Employees; and Michael Zagarell, editor of *Political Affairs* and candidate for Congress 19th C.D.

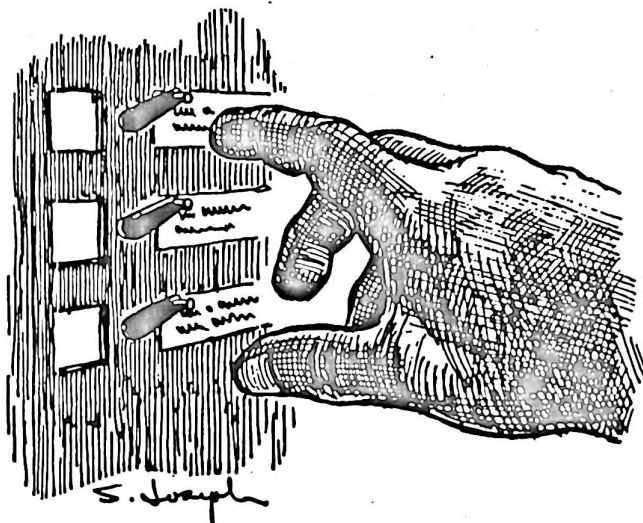
Moderating the discussion was James Steele, Chair of the Legislative Commission, CPUSA.

## James Steele

*Today we are discussing the issue of Black representation in the 1988 elections. It is a discussion which takes place in the framework of the celebration of Afro-American History Month.*

*The two fit very well together. The increase in the number of Afro-American elected officials is one of the most dramatic aspects of the making of history in the United States. In 1965, when the Voting Rights Act was passed there were less than 500 Black elected officials in the country. Only 78 of those were in the South where 65 percent of Afro-Americans resided at the time. In 1988 there are close to 6,700 Black elected officials throughout the United States and over 4,300 of them are in the deep South where more than 50 percent of all Black Americans still live.*

*In 1970 there were only 10 Afro-American*



*members of Congress. Today there are 23. But there are still no Black members of the Senate.*

*There has been a dramatic increase in Black representation in the past 25 years. On the other hand, and there is invariably "another hand" to developments, this increase still represents only 1.3% of the total number of elected officials in the United States.*

*We are now in the midst of an important election, the outcome of which will decide the next occupant of the White House. It will also decide who will sit in 33 seats of the United States Senate, all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and literally thousands of seats in state, legislative, county and municipal offices. One can say on November 8th the political balance, if not in the country, then certainly in elected offices, is going to be decided. It is in that context that the issue of Black representation must be posed. How is it possible to in-*

*crease this representation? What ways can the Afro-American people strengthen their contribution to the process of turning our country around, changing the direction of policy away from Reaganism and toward progress?*

*The first question I would like to pose to our roundtable is this: What impact do you think the progress in Black representation has had on the political situation in our country?*

## **Gus Newport** \_\_\_\_\_

You've laid out the increase in Black representation. I think we have had a preview of things that could come when we look back at the 1986 midterm elections—when the Democrats regained control of the Senate and rejected the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. The new elected officials saw that a new civil rights movement was in the making and they were alarmed by that. That's why they chose, rightfully so, to make sure that Bork didn't sit on the Supreme Court. Those midterm elections showed a new sense of determination by the people. The positive results of the 1984 Rainbow elections and the massive increase of Black people registering to vote and actually voting certainly had its effects on the 1986 elections.

One of the things we must remember—one of the first Black Mayors elected in a major city in our country was Carl Stokes in Cleveland. If you recall, Cleveland had just gone through a massive bankruptcy at the time. The analysis that we in the U.S. Conference of Mayors and also the Black Mayors Conference had is that most cities elected Black mayors after these municipalities became bankrupt. Now if we use that as a premise today then I would suggest that we're on the verge of having quite a few Black elected officials because many cities face sharp economic problems.

Many of the new mayors have proven themselves highly qualified, because they were able to keep those cities from going under at a time when one had to come up with creative alternatives.

I remember we did take steps that put the great majority of the taxes on the business sec-

tor. And we were able to do it without any type of court challenge or something of the kind.

In general, people have become more accepting of Black elected officials. I think they know, for the most part there is more progressive government when there are Black officials in policy-making positions. And when we look at the budgets that have been put forward in the last number of years by the Congressional Black Caucus, which have been the most responsible budgets from the standpoint of cutting the military and providing services to the people, this expectation is substantiated.

In Iowa, Jackson received 10 percent of the vote despite the fact that there the state has a small Black population. In New Hampshire he received eight percent. But here we are only talking about a total of 30-40 delegates. On Super Tuesday (March 8th), we are talking about 1,200-1,400 delegates. If Jesse Jackson wins 25 percent, or more, of the delegates then Black people and the whole progressive movement will be in a stronger position to influence the Democratic platform. This would change the body politic in the United States.

## **Cecilia McCall** \_\_\_\_\_

I think it is true that there has been a significant increase in Black representation, but we all know that it isn't enough. Despite the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus generates a magnificent budget each year it doesn't have enough members, or enough support at this point, to get that budget passed. We have to increase representation among Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and women who together will help form a significant base in the Congress to allow this progressive agenda to be carried forward.

In order to measure the struggle we also have to look at what we don't have yet. For example, we don't have Black representation among senators and governors. There will be a major battle in cities like New York to elect more Black mayors. It is significant that that battle will be waged in NYC, the financial capital of the country and, perhaps, the world. This issue will play a critical role in the fight to wrest this city from the control of conservatives and the

Right-wing.

**James Steele** \_\_\_\_\_

*I'd like to ask our two trade unionists to comment on the impact of Black representation on the situation in the country. Has it had an impact on the trade union movement?*

**Raglan George** \_\_\_\_\_

Without even hesitating, I would give this question an unequivocal "yes." It has had a clear impact on us in labor and what we are able to accomplish.

But I would like to speak about the workers in the union I represent. Like other workers, our union's membership is seeing the importance of being politically involved. Our members are getting more politically.

The labor movement in our progress has seen the birth, for example, of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The CBTU has become a symbol of the struggle of the Black minority in the labor movement and still the system has quieted it down.

As we all recall, Jesse Jackson didn't begin his political activity just this year. He also ran for President in 1984. At that time I went to the Democratic convention. I, as quite a few other delegates on the floor, tried to convince the CBTU to support Jackson. There was a reluctance to do so then. Today things have changed. Workers are more aware. The 10 percent vote Jesse Jackson got in the Iowa primaries says a great deal. It says that, in a lot of areas, working people aren't looking at the color of the candidate's skin any more. People are looking at the quality and content of a candidate's program. That is a very important development.

**Kay Tillow** \_\_\_\_\_

I think there is an increasing convergence between labor and the Black community. Labor sees its interests being tied to the interests of the Black community and the growth of Black representation. We've seen it recently—Jesse Jackson did well in central Pennsylvania. He ap-

peared with the paper workers in an area of the state where there are hardly any Black people. Yet people there have not stopped talking about it, in terms of the ideas he put forward about jobs, and what to do to guarantee a future for workers. In Western Pennsylvania there are 30 people who are running as delegates for Jackson to the Democratic Convention. Thirteen of them are union people, many of them are women. Most interesting, many of them are not top-level officials but activists who are seeing the need for an activism that goes further politically.

In Pennsylvania we've had difficulties in changing the situation politically. Today we have been talking about the tremendous victory in 1986 when a lot of Reaganites were thrown out of office. We were not able to do that statewide in Pennsylvania. We still have two Republican senators. But we were able to win a state wide office for a Black woman, Dora Smith, elected to a judgeship. She won because we had absolute unity between the trade union movement and the Black community. That unity, together with the women's movement, did it.

**Michael Zagarell** \_\_\_\_\_

The examples of labor-Black unity that Raglan George and Kay Tillow just gave, are very important.

When you look over the list of where Black officials have been elected, the importance of labor-Black unity becomes very clear.

From the media, one would get the picture that Black unity alone was decisive in these victories. Their comments show that that is not the whole picture.

This is shown in the cities where Black mayors have been elected in the past years. While I don't have the most up-to-date list—this one is as of 1983—it shows that 27 cities have elected Black mayors. In 17 of these 27, Black voters were a minority of the voting population. This means that in more than half of these cities, it was only a coalition of Black and white, in most cases built on Black-labor unity, that brought about these victories.

This is important because, since 1971, the

pace of advance in winning Black representation has slowed down. One reason for this is that the number of new places where Black unity alone could elect Black officials has declined. New developments—changes in thinking among white working people, the rising level of Black-labor unity—show the possibilities for keeping the momentum going.

### **James Steele** \_\_\_\_\_

*Maybe we can get to some of the new questions that are emerging.*

*The most recent figures show that if you take the 23 members of Congress, only 14 of them are elected from congressional districts that are majority Black. And beyond that there are only two congressional districts that are majority Black in the country. That may change somewhat after the 1990 census and the 1991 reapportionment. But if things are based upon being able to achieve a breakthrough on the strength of the Black vote alone, you reach a certain point of diminishing returns. Would anyone like to take this further?*

### **Cecilia McCall** \_\_\_\_\_

Jesse Jackson, in my view, represents the best of what Black people can contribute to any struggle, and that is inclusiveness. Black people never present a platform for themselves alone. They bring in the issues, the important issues that are related to all people. This is because Black people and Black candidates are grounded in the grass roots. If we are not representative and responsive to grass-roots people, we get nowhere. We begin with a grass-roots base and I think that is what other people find appealing and respond to.

### **Gus Newport** \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Steele raises a question we have to be realistically aware of—Black representation cannot increase without coalitions. The Black population of Berkeley, California, where I was mayor for 8 years, is only 19 percent. Yet the polls showed that if I had run for a third time I would

have been unopposed. It is coalition, based on issues, that have resulted in the aggressive, progressive agenda that is necessary to move the country forward.

And, basically, that is why Jesse Jackson was in fact as successful as he was in 1984. Certainly Cecilia McCall has hit the nail on the head by talking about the grass-roots efforts. Because never have people felt as committed or as much a part of an election as in 1984.

The social analysts certainly were surprised by the massive numbers of new registrants in 1984. It was always thought that we, as a people, would not participate in the body politic. But, in fact, when somebody puts forth a clear cut message in response to the problems that affect us, we will get involved. Which also means that people of other ethnic groups who have the same types of problems, probably increase their registration too. The body politic in the United States seems to go through cycles, and Lord knows that the cycle of Ronald Reagan is about to come to an end.

You know, when Reagan was first elected president I used to go around the country apologizing, because we in California sent to the White House Hoover, Nixon and Reagan. It seems to me that that in itself would be reason enough not to ever elect somebody as president from California. But, hopefully, we have all learned this time.

I don't think that the INF missile treaty is being signed just because Ronald Reagan wants to go down in history for something—although that may be the only thing positive for which he will ever be remembered. He has signed the agreement because the peace movement continued its struggle. We've got to forge the various issues and bring coalitions together. Usually coalitions only come together around a single issue. Hopefully we can unite together around a multiplicity of issues.

### **Kay Tillow** \_\_\_\_\_

It is important to note that this discussion coincides with an increasing crisis for union people. We can no longer solve the problems in the old ways. We used to threaten the boss, if he

doesn't change his view, we're going to "shut it down." Now the boss is threatening us—either we take the concessions or *he's* going to shut it down. As a result the political alternatives are more important to union people. Unionists are seeking the coalition that can bring some change in the economic crisis we face. And this requires new approaches.

## Raglan George \_\_\_\_\_

I also want to speak to the plant-closing issue. Plant closings are having a tremendous impact, especially in industrial unions like mine. Our members worry about this issue. We had a meeting just the other day in which this issue came up. At that meeting it was reported that employers are saying that, if we don't take give-backs, they're going to shut down their plants. These are employers that are making millions of dollars in profits each year. During the meeting I said, "It's time for us to start talking about co-opping and taking over the plants. If the profit is not high enough for the employers to run them, then we should do it just to live and make our wages for ourselves."

I was encouraged to speak like that by members of the union, people in the grass roots, especially those struggling in the political arena. These members are working to get candidates to embrace these kinds of proposals—ideas that workers want and need.

It is great to go into the local union and talk to people who are participating in the political process as delegates to the Democratic convention, as well as in other ways. In past elections you wouldn't have heard or seen such a level of interest or participation. Now all you hear is, "Can you help get signatures on these nominating petitions so I can be a delegate to this convention." It is really heart warming. The grass-roots activity is taking hold and workers are starting to take initiatives into their own hands. In the grass roots, Black, white, brown, men and women are coming together. I think that is going to be a significant factor in this election.

All the presidential candidates know what it means to have the Black vote behind them. But the Black vote is not enough. It is a coalition

of all the people that is going to put somebody in the White House. I'm hoping that labor gets the message and starts to develop labor candidates. The only way we are going to change the situation in this country is for labor to get more deeply involved.

We have to take the people who are hanging out there—who don't really have anywhere to go. We have to take people who have questions that are unanswered and are, therefore, either running midstream or falling to the Right and bring them back. The only way we can do that is by building a coalition.

## James Steele \_\_\_\_\_

*If I understand the panel's views, you are saying that Black elected officials tend to advocate progressive politics and this is in the interests of white and Black working people. Black officials are most dependent on the grass roots because that is the only way they can win. Because of the class composition of the Black community this grass-roots constituency tends to be workers and this affects the whole labor movement.*

*As I see it, the panel is also saying there is a coming together of interests, of issues, so to speak—a coming together of the struggle for equality, the struggle for jobs, peace and so forth. In this coalition lies greater prospects of electing more Black elected officials, to the extent that they advocate policies that reflect this coalition.*

*I was wondering if we could spend time analyzing this a little further.*

*Mike Zagarell, you are a candidate for Congress. Perhaps you could give us some insight into how you expect to address these questions.*

## Michael Zagarell \_\_\_\_\_

I'm running in the 19th Congressional district, which covers a section of the Bronx and Yonkers. The 19th CD is drawn in such a way as to have a 75 percent white majority. Next to this district is the 18th CD which is 80 percent Black and Hispanic. In a sense these two districts divide the Bronx in half, splitting the population by race and nationality.

While I oppose the way this district was drawn, I should emphasize that the overwhelming majority of the people in this district, white, Black and Puerto Rican, are working people and share most of the problems in common. This is the basis for a progressive coalition.

For the people of the 19th CD the most pressing issue is housing. Properly developed, this issue can play an important role in building unity, within the 19th CD and between the people there and those in surrounding districts.

So far, I am the only declared progressive independent candidate for any of the available positions in the district. I hope that soon we will be able to build a coalition that unites several candidates of different nationalities running for several offices. By doing this we would build unity, and win more votes from white residents for minority representation, because this representation would be seen as representing the interests of the majority.

### **James Steele** \_\_\_\_\_

*I hear a number of the panelists using the words "system" and "structure." The panel seems to be saying that the problems in the country are so deep that the problems the people face are basically problems of the social system. Some of the panel have noted that Jesse Jackson is using the vehicle of the Democratic Party. I assume that implies there are other vehicles as well. Mike, for example, is running on a third line as an independent candidate. I'm interested in knowing if you have any thoughts about structural changes needed to facilitate the kind of advances that we've been speaking about. What changes are needed for enhancing Black political representation, raising the clout of the Black vote and Black-white unity in support of other progressive candidates?*

### **Gus Newport** \_\_\_\_\_

Many of us had hoped that Jesse would have run on a third party line in 1984. I still feel that way. This is probably the one western country that does not have a labor party of sorts, and my feeling is until we develop a labor party we're

not going to get the kinds of structural changes that are necessary.

If Jesse is successful on Super Tuesday, the people can use that as leverage on the platform of the Democratic Party. Yet we can only have so much impact without a third party. I think this will eventually have to come forward in order to have the impact that is necessary.

### **Michael Zagarell** \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to advance some other structural changes for discussion. Some of them are already being discussed in the progressive movement.

The election laws, as I see it, are structured against increasing all forms of democratic participation. The primaries, for example, are loaded against Black and working-class representation. The early primaries are supposed to cull out the weaker candidates. If this is so why do the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries come so early and carry such weight? These states are not the most advantageous for Black and labor candidates. While it has not turned out that way in life, Super Tuesday was also designed to stifle the progressive movement and aid the Right-wing.

The whole primary system should be reorganized.

The question of voter registration is a very big area of concern. In most cases Black officials have been elected in tandem with voter registration drives. There have been a lot of proposals for making registration easier. The best proposal, as I see it, is automatic universal registration for all voters. Studies show this would significantly increase both Black and labor political clout.

There is also the issue of voting. We need reforms to make it easier for all working people to vote, weekend voting for example. One concept that would be difficult to win right now, but has a great deal of merit to it, would be universal voting. There are several capitalist nations that have that. Such a proposal would require that people go to the polls, even if they chose to cast an abstention ballot. Studies show that this kind of voting system would signifi-

cantly raise the political strength of both the Black and labor movements, as well as the power of other oppressed peoples. Again, studies show that if such a system was in existence in 1984, several critical states would have gone against Reagan, affecting the election outcome.

The question of affirmative action in reapportionment is also worth looking at. When reapportionment takes place, as it does after each census, the law should not only require that you cannot reapportion to lessen the number of districts that will likely elect Black representatives, as is now the case, but there should be laws which require that the districts drawn be those that will most likely give the best chance of electing the largest possible number of Black and other minority representatives—up to the time when minority political representation equals the proportions of those peoples in the population.

Distribution of federal funds is another area that ought to be examined. As a result of long years of discrimination, Black people have been excluded from whole areas of business, especially big business. And we all know that in politics money is critical. Since business circles are still segregated in our country Black candidates face an unequal opportunity to be elected.

A cap on election spending for all candidates, combined with a law which disproportionately gives federal funds to minority candidates to make up for this discrimination, would significantly democratize our electoral system.

Then there is the issue of the Senate, which is much more difficult. We have to face the fact that in our country there has been only one Afro-American senator, Edward R. Brooke (MA), since Reconstruction.

Here too, I think federal funding distributed on an affirmative action basis would encourage all parties to run more Black and Hispanic candidates, as well as women.

The important point here is that since such laws would aid minority representation, which in most cases aids those who support a more working-class outlook, such regulations would greatly strengthen the power of the whole working class.

There is also the issue of proportional rep-

resentation. Maybe we could come back to this a little later.

## **James Steele** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mike has spoken about one aspect of structure. I'm curious if either Raglan or Kay would talk about the structure within the labor movement for building greater participation in the political arena, and maybe you can cite some experiences where it's been effective, for example labor political action committees, congressional district legislative action committees, or labor-supported candidates.*

## **Raglan George** \_\_\_\_\_

Within the UFCW we have political action committees that have been set up to support labor candidates around the country. These committees work with local unions, such as ours, around the country. This is very effective. It works. For example, Chicago Congressman Charles Hayes came out of the UFCW. He ran, and was supported by this type of action committee around the country. And he gets continuous support to stay in office from these committees.

These committees target areas—and we do research around country to determine the most critical districts—that need our support. Our goal is to help the candidates who will look at labor's problems and support labor's needs. And, as you can see in many cases, this is an important contributor to building Black political representation.

## **Kay Tillow** \_\_\_\_\_

I think that there's really an increased activity among the unions. One of the things that is now available is the computerized printout which matches registration of the union's membership against voter registration. People used to just be baffled by those. But in recent times, people are very seriously taking those printouts and seeking to develop a really grassroots kind of program to make the impact of the union movement as big as it possibly can be. I think



it's making a difference in terms of what can happen in a state.

In our state, labor showed its independence by backing Bob Edgar for the Senate in the primary campaign against a very conservative person who had the support of the Democratic Party leadership. Labor is becoming a more serious force, a better organized political force. We are learning how to more effectively bring people from different unions and movements together.

**Jim Steele** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mike, you mentioned proportional representation. I know that New York is due to vote on a new Charter in November and that raises this issue once again. Do you want to comment on this?*

**Mike Zagarell** \_\_\_\_\_

We once had PR in New York, and it helped the progressive movement elect the first Black Councilman, Adam Clayton Powell, as well as several labor and Communist leaders to office.

The overthrow of that law in 1947 was a blow to the whole progressive movement.

The present situation in the City Council is extremely discriminatory. Black and Hispanic people are now 47% of the population in New York, but are about one-fourth of the the City Council. This is discrimination. So far the best proposals that have been raised to correct this would create smaller councilmanic districts. This proposal would, most likely, raise the level of combined Black and Hispanic representation to about one-third of that body, whereas the population would require close to 50 percent representation. So even this proposal, the best offered to date, is inadequate. A return to proportional representation, however, would most likely increase the number of minority representatives to close to their proportion of the entire population. And it would do this not by concentrating the Black and Hispanic vote into separate districts, but by integrating it into the process as a whole, allowing it to affect the political positions of all candidates.

The question that should be raised is: why not do this also in the congressional elections?

Most of us think that the present form of congressional elections is proscribed by the Constitution. It is not. The law determining the way we elect congressional representatives was only enacted in 1842. Before that, there were different ways of electing congressmen, all of which conformed with the Constitution. So there is a constitutional basis for proportional representation in congressional elections as well. If it were done it would allow us to solve the problem of increasing Black representation to its fullest. At the same time it would have the maximum impact on the elections as a whole, which many proposals for reapportionment do not do. For example there is now a set of proposals in South Carolina that will reapportion the districts to increase Black representation. Yet some of these proposals also form more conservative all-white districts as a consequence of separating and concentrating Black voters into other districts. The progressive movement should not have to choose between these two alternatives.

In a PR system several congressional candidates would contest a much larger district. Thus all candidates would have to compete for the Black vote. And yet that vote, through the proportional system would almost guarantee a proportional number of minority officials.

I think this is something worth studying.

**Cecilia McCall** \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to offer a final thought about the Presidential elections. I don't think the issue in this election is Jesse Jackson. The point now is that Jesse Jackson is the most progressive candidate on the issues. That is to say that, if there was a white candidate who was more progressive than Jesse Jackson, the people would have to rally around that candidate. I don't think this is a Black or white issue.

Black people will always vote for the best candidates, whether they are white or Black. There have been several places in the country where conservative Black candidates ran for office against more progressive white candidates

thinking they would win the votes of the Black community. They didn't. I am also a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), here in New York. Our membership is both Black and white. But we are largely Black. That, however, does not mean that our president must be Black. We have an outstanding member who is white, and we agreed she should be our chief officer. This is an example of the point I am making.

## James Steele

---

*I would like to make some concluding remarks. First, I want to thank all of the panelists.*

*This has been a very important roundtable discussion. It was about a topic that needs to be discussed further in every organization in our country.*

*We need to discuss more, and to link our discussions with action.*

*There are, today, a number of obstacles that must be taken into account if we are going to maximize the clout of the Black vote. They are the same obstacles that stand in our way when working to build a new level of electoral unity of all races and nationalities on a progressive foundation.*

*We must end restrictions on access to the ballot.*

*We Communists face special restrictions. But if we can end these restrictions, we will also be winning greater ballot rights for everyone. We should all consider what it would mean to have a Communist in Congress or State Legislature or City Council. It would not only strengthen all the forces of democracy and peace in our country, it would also open the way for a stronger upsurge of the independent forces.*

*Today we have been discussing where things will go in the future. Will progressive electoral movements stay in the Democratic Party? I think not. And yet without election law reform—without ending restrictions on access to the ballot, the forces that are now active in movements, like those around Jesse Jackson's campaign, will not be able to get on the ballot as*

*independents or as third party movements.*

*We must give more attention to reforming the campaign financing laws. We must end the rule that money is the determinant of who can run for the higher offices in our country. Think about it—most candidates will not consider running for the U.S. Senate unless they have three million dollars guaranteed to them. Where does that put the possibilities of independent, labor-backed candidates? With such requirements, candidates are almost compelled to make deals with corporations to get elected. We must eliminate obstacles to peoples' candidates receiving government funds when entering races for the House and Senate.*

*Our country also needs stricter laws guaranteeing equal access to the media in elections.*

*Our panel also noted the need for such reforms as proportional representation and universal voter registration. We should note that Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) has offered a bill, HR 1528, that would create uniform requirements for election to federal offices. This law would require an independent candidate for President of the United States to collect about 10,000 signatures per state in order to qualify for ballot status.*

*John Conyers and Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA) are sponsoring legislation for universal voter registration, including registration on election day.*

*As our panelists have pointed out, working people are taking more initiatives in the political arena. We, too, must work to involve every organization we participate in to develop an electoral component, whether it is a tenants' association, a block club, a trade union or peace organization.*

*In opening this roundtable, I said that marking Afro-American History Month and discussing ways of increasing Black political representation are two things that go eminently well together. Now I want to close our program by urging all of us to make new history for our country by fighting to increase the political strength of the people—so that people in the future can celebrate the accomplishments of our generation with equal vigor. □*

# The Political Testament of Lenin

NIKOLAI BUKHARIN

The creations of great people—and one of the greatest was our late leader and teacher—represent a wonderful treasure house of ideas. One has to choose from the remarkable multiformity of that treasure store. One has to limit the theme, since the riches of the ideological heritage are immense and unbounded. I limit, therefore, the theme of my speech to the political bequest of Lenin, the totality of the thoughts which Vladimir Ilyich left. I will speak of the penetrating and ingenious plan which was left to the Party for its work.

The most important thing that Lenin left us is contained in five remarkable articles which are deep in content: "Pages From A Diary," "Our Revolution," "How We Should Reorganize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection," "Better Fewer But Better" and "On Cooperation."

I know very well that all these articles have been quoted on more than one occasion, that almost every phrase in them has been subjected to analysis. But there remains, to this day, one gap which I would like to fill at this meeting of remembrance. That gap consists in there not having been any attempts to-date, as far as I know, to study these articles in their mutual connection, to understand them precisely as

This is an abridged translation of a speech made commemorating the 5th anniversary of the death of V.I. Lenin.

Nikolai I. Bukharin, a member of the Central Committee, CPSU, was executed in 1938 as an organizer of a group that conspired for the overthrow of the USSR. On February 4, 1988, the USSR Supreme Court announced that the trial and conviction of Bukharin (along with others in the group) was based on falsified facts and a confession wrung through unlawful means.

*The bracketed page citations in the text are all from V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966; in English.*

part of a large plan of perspectives for our great communist work.

Precisely in the article about the workers' and peasants' inspection, which would seem to consider merely an "individual" matter, Lenin writes: "That is how I link up in my mind the general plan of our work, of our policy, of our tactics, of our strategy, with the functions of the reorganized Workers' and Peasants' Inspection." [p. 50]

If we look carefully at the last articles Lenin wrote before his death, we will see that they contain a general evaluation of our revolution from the viewpoint of the possibility of building socialism in our land; general, sharply demarcated lines for our development; a most deep, though very concise analysis of the international situation; fundamentals for our strategy and tactics; issues for our economic construction; and matters for the cultural revolution, of the basic class correlations, of the state apparatus, of the organization of the masses, and, finally, of the organization of our party and its leadership.

Essentially one cannot name a single issue of any significance in our politics which does not find analysis in that general plan developed by Comrade Lenin. It is a huge canvas which, with immense power, convincing simplicity and imagination, portrays the grave tread of a historical process.

## I. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUILDING SOCIALISM

I will start off with the matter of a general analysis of our revolution from the angle of the opportunity for building socialism in our country. This is the subject of the article "Our Revolution."

"Our Revolution" is one of the most original and most daring creations of Vladimir Ilyich. He foresaw that various doubts might arise with respect to the construction of socialism in our country; he knew that our working class would

perhaps have to undergo more than one wave of attacks from parties which once acted as vigorous political enemies within our country, from their successors, and from renegades in our own party.

He understood full well that the various difficulties which construction might pose again and again to the wavering intelligentsia, the question of the possibility of socialism in our country; that secret proponents of "normal" capitalist relations will turn up.

This is why Lenin once more made a key issue of our revolution, of the character of that revolution; and of evaluating it as a whole.

Comrade Lenin names a key problem: it is said that we did not have sufficient objective economic and cultural prerequisites for passing over to socialism. All right. But that does not yet decide the matter. What don't the Kautskyan pedants grasp? They do not understand the fundamental idea that there may be special exceptions determined by the originality of the internal and external situation.

That originality occurred, precisely, in our case because our revolution was linked first with world war; second with the beginning of gigantic revolutionary rumblings among hundreds of millions of eastern peoples; and third with a particularly favorable combination of class forces within the country, a combination which Marx, back in the 1850s, considered the most advantageous. Hence, that completely original and unconventional situation was the foundation for the entire development of our revolution. Its uniqueness made it possible for us first to conquer for ourselves "worker-peasant power" and then, "on the basis of worker-peasant power and a Soviet system, we should proceed to catch-up with other nations."

These tremendously daring theses were essential also, according to Vladimir Ilyich, in order to spin out the thread further. If our socialist revolution, in significant measure, is founded on that special combination of class forces which Marx had taken into account, then that combination of proletarian revolution and peasant war (i.e., the union of the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working class) had to be extended and retained what-

ever the cost. If one were to lose that particularly favorable combination of class forces, the entire foundation for unfolding the socialist revolution in our country would disappear.

Lenin foresaw a danger that people, sheltering behind revolutionary phraseology, would not understand the full immense, decisive change of principle which is beginning throughout society following the conquest of power by the proletariat.

## II. DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL LINE OF POLICY

In his remarkable article, "On Cooperation", Comrade Lenin writes: "We have to admit that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism." [p. 474] This thesis is formulated most distinctly and with strict and passionate political energy, precisely in this article:

The radical modification is this; formerly we placed, and had to place, the main emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning political power etc. Now the emphasis is changing and shifting to peaceful, organizational, "cultural" work. I should say that emphasis is shifting to educational work, were it not for our international relations, were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we leave that aside, however, and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis in our work is certainly changing to education. [Ibid.]

This does not at all mean that Lenin here denies class struggle, since "peaceful, organizational" and "educational" work is also a form of class struggle. This means that the proletariat draws behind it the entire working nation, that it is responsible for the development of society as a whole, that it becomes a great collective organizer of the whole "national economy," that the trend of development is not along the line of spreading a gulf between the basic classes (the working class and peasantry).

It would, of course, be improper for us not to take account of the special features of each individual stage in our struggle. But, at the same time, the main statements by Comrade Lenin about the character of our development re-

main deeply correct. And this should remain the theoretical foundation in defining our great tactical road.

### III. THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND ITS EVALUATION

In his political testament Lenin was far from limiting himself to general matters: from the general he proceeds to the particular, to more and more specific things, and with a master's hand, adds more and more lively and bright colors, posing more and more perturbing programs. Vladimir Ilyich naturally understood that most major difficulties and most insidious threats and perils are associated with our international position. He described it as follows:

1. Division of the imperialist states in Western Europe—Germany, lying at rock-bottom, is pecked at by the victor nations.

2. The vanquishers, France, Britain, the United States and Japan, can consolidate their power, and can make concessions to the working class which, "nevertheless, retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of 'class truce'." [p. 499] This wording is precise, correct and cautious in proper measure.

3. At the same time, the revolutionary movement is maturing in the countries of the East (India, China, etc.) and most of humanity is being drawn into the revolutionary process.

4. External conflicts are brewing between "the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East." [p. 500]

5. Contradictions and conflicts are brewing between the counter-revolutionary imperialists and a national revolutionary movement in the East whose material forces are still weak.

6. Conflict is brewing between imperialism and the land of Soviets.

Vladimir Ilyich was not in the slightest afraid of being suspected of opportunism or any similar mortal sin when he wrote that the conquering imperialist states would "thrive"; and, on the other hand, he noted those contradictions which capitalist stabilization engenders. And, particularly interesting, Vladimir Ilyich connected the ensuing revolutionary explosion

directly with coming war.

As for the big popular movements, he primarily sought them in the East where he perceived a revolutionary situation and a possibility for direct revolutionary explosions by large popular masses. Has not history fully justified this forecast?

### IV. FUNDAMENTALS OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Through analysis of the international situation, Vladimir Ilyich determined the fundamentals of our strategy and our tactics. He viewed our international position primarily from the angle of military danger which he unconditionally considered the main thing.

He posed the questions: "What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country?" [p. 499] "Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries?" [p. 500] What tactics should we use to "prevent the West European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us?" [p. 500]

Whoever knows how chaste Vladimir Ilyich was in speaking "big" words, cannot fail to read in these formulations the deepest alarm (the alarm of a serious mind and a wise strategist) for the destinies of the entire revolution.

Lenin was far from being a frivolous jingoist; he seriously took account of the ominous force of the enemies. He openly spoke, too, about our weaknesses and urged the masses to surmount them. He pointedly indicated the low productivity of popular labor. He noted that the imperialists had not managed to destroy the Soviet State but had managed almost to ruin it, to complicate its development, to brake that development.

One should recognize that, although we have made a great leap in the realm of economic and cultural development, we are living nonetheless in circumstances of semi-blockade. And, in respect to the low productivity of popular labor, although we have made a major leap forward, here too, by comparison with Western Europe and America we still stand on an exceptionally low, half-barbaric rung of development.

Lenin asked,

geoisie, are now permitted to participate on certain terms. If serious class disagreements arise between these classes, a split will be inevitable. But the grounds for such a split are not inevitable in our social system, and it is the principal task of our Central Committee and the Central Control Commission, as well as of our party as a whole, to watch very closely over such circumstances as may cause a split, and to forestall them, for in the final analysis the fate of our republic will depend on whether the peasant masses will stand by the working class, loyal to their alliance, or whether they will permit the "Nepmen", i.e., the new bourgeoisie, to drive a wedge between them and the working class, to split them off from the working class. The more clearly we see this alternative, the more clearly all our workers and peasants understand it, the greater are the chances that we shall avoid a split, which would be fatal for the Soviet Republic. [pp. 485-6].

I draw attention to certain things that would seem monstrous for Marxists.

Anyone understands that if two classes exist, then between those two classes there are class distinctions, and Vladimir Ilyich develops the formulation that, if serious class differences arise between these two classes, then a split is inevitable and such a split would inevitably be fatal for the Soviet Republic.

The working class now faces the task of constantly remaking the peasantry, remaking it "in and after their own image," not fencing themselves off from it but fusing with the entire mass to lead it after themselves.

And precisely, therefore, follows his general directive: the *main* task of all our Party and all its organization consists in looking to foresee what split might emerge and, spotting the danger in time, to liquidate it.

## VII. MATTERS OF CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION

Thus, we have industrialization plus cooperation. But cooperation presumes cultural revolution. Here, Lenin, advancing the slogan of cultural revolution, was far from limiting himself to this bare slogan. Here he also reveals its specific content; he says what needs to be done, what one needs to pay the utmost attention to,

and where to find the "link in the chain." To this he devoted the article "Pages From A Diary." Lenin presents this task, naturally, from the angle of correlation between the working class and peasantry.

Here we have a fundamental political question—the relations between town and country—which is of decisive importance for the whole of our revolution. [p. 465]

The general formulation is clear. But, we are not doing the main thing: we have not placed the popular teacher on an appropriate height. Lenin immediately goes further. Taking the structure of our state budget, he says: if you want a cultural revolution, then my directive to you is that there must be a readjustment of all our state budget in the direction of initial education. Nobody can say that this can be done immediately or even in one year, but the directive is bold, revolutionary and deeply correct.

You will look and see just what that means: chasing all extravagance out of our social relations, all high and mighty games, all that is unneeded, shifting the state budget toward an initial popular education; raising our people's teachers to the appropriate height. This, of course, is a whole revolution. That revolution can be accomplished, but against it stand spontaneous forces of habit, mundane living, prejudice, bureaucratic routine, and imitative lordly manners.

Proceeding from the tasks of the cultural revolution, Lenin advances an idea of mass workers' organizations which would penetrate the countryside. But immediately following, Comrade Lenin explains this concept, knowing how much the pretty turn of a phrase and drum-beating, instead of action, are enjoyed in our country. He explains his thought:

Under no circumstances must this be understood to mean that we should immediately propagate purely and strictly communist ideas in the countryside. As long as our countryside lacks the material basis for communism, it will be, I should say, harmful, in fact, I should say, fatal, for communists to do so.

That is a fact. We must start by establishing contacts between town and country without the preconceived aim of implanting communism in the rural dis-

tricts. It is an aim which cannot be achieved at the present time. It is inopportune, and to set an aim like that at the present time would be harmful, instead of useful. [p. 465]

This is the wisdom of an organizer who organizes tens and hundreds of millions, not just a core of young people, and knows how to approach those tens of millions. Discussing the question of forms of connection between town and country [patronage, etc.], he insists: do not do it bureaucratically. And he advances the slogan of creating all possible associations of the workers, avoiding in full measure their bureaucratization.

Thus, Lenin expresses the issue of cultural revolution and especially the issue of the countryside. And it should be noted how highly Vladimir Ilyich assessed that work. In the article "On Cooperation," he says that we face two main tasks: 1) remolding the state apparatus; and 2) cultural work for the peasantry. In another place he appraises that cultural work among the peasants as a universal-historical cultural task.

### VIII. MATTERS OF APPARATUS AND OF LEADERSHIP

Vladimir Ilyich addresses the concept that the condition of the state apparatus and the quality of its leadership are one of the most important components in a cultural revolution, one of the greatest levers for socialist accumulation and involvement of the masses in construction—and any petty peasant should build socialism.

This matter is expanded in two articles: "How We Should Reorganize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection" and "Better Fewer, but Better." The precise approach of Vladimir Ilyich is interesting.

It is time we did something about it.

We must show sound scepticism for too rapid progress, for boastfulness, etc. We must give thought to testing the steps forward we proclaim every hour, take every minute and then prove every second that they are flimsy, superficial and misunderstood. The most harmful thing here would be haste. [p. 488]

Proceeding from this formula, Vladimir Ilyich

approaches the issue of our apparatus.

You recall what preconditions Vladimir Ilyich set concerning the state apparatus: there must be economy because only then is it possible to industrialize; there must be simplification because only then can we draw the masses. One needs to attain a general increase in the productivity of labor. Hence the issue of the state apparatus, from an angle of involving the masses, economizing, and raising productivity of labor, is connected with all issues. All the issues, from economic to cultural, are concentrated in the issue of the state apparatus.

And this is understandable. Eventually the state apparatus is that very lever, that very machinery through which our Party directs all its policy.

Then, comrades, Vladimir Ilyich asks: if the issue of the state apparatus stands thus, how should we fix it, where should we turn, and what levers should we grasp? And he gives a remarkable formula. He says we should turn to the deepest source of dictatorship; and that deepest source is formed by "the advanced workers."

So first, we must turn to the advanced workers, and second, to "the really enlightened elements" in our country . . . a staff of workers really abreast of the time, i.e. not inferior to the best West European standards." [p. 487].

The "really enlightened elements" should have these qualities: they, first, should never take a word on trust; second, never utter a word against their conscience (conscience cannot be cancelled in politics, as some think); third, they should not be shy to admit difficulties; and fourth, they should not fear any struggle for attaining a serious goal set before them.

If one thoroughly studies the whole plan of Vladimir Ilyich integrally, he has two main axes in it: the first is formed by better work, economy, industrialization, increased productivity of labor, increased quality indices; and the second, by correct correlations between the working class and peasantry, and care that no split emerges between these two classes.

So, if we now bring all the plan together, we will see that, apart from a general examination of our revolution, an evaluation is given of

the international situation; from that international situation one gets the problem of assertion of power and its consolidation; and one finds the main directive to the working class to retain power over the small and very small peasantry.

From this, in turn, develops the policy of industrializing the country on a basis of savings, of improved quality of work, with the peasants joining the cooperative movement—this is the simplest, easiest way, and one without coercion, of involving the peasantry in socialist construction. Therefrom, once again, spring the slogans of the cultural revolution, restructuring of the apparatus into one that is business-like and works well and attracts the masses; from care for a correct correlation of classes there springs concern for the Party line, for the unity of our Party.

On these is built the plan for a dihedron body (the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection plus the Central Control Commission) which would, on the one hand, see to quality of work and combine in itself, control, practical activities and scientific-theoretical activities in the sphere of labor organization. On the other hand it would see to Party unity and, thereby, assure amiable accomplishment of the worker and peasant union.

Comrades, I have tried not to miss a single important idea of Lenin and have added absolutely nothing of my own, except a few comments which sprang from the relevant articles of Lenin. I have tried to present them as an internal whole, as the political testament of Vladimir Ilyich. It is apparent that the great stretch of history which we have gone through since his death has introduced considerable changes in the objective conditions for development.

One can say, without risk of error, that none of us could really have expected that we could set a whole series of records, for instance in industrial construction. And we have really set a whole series of records and we have many achievements in the sphere of rationalizing our industry, in the sphere of scientific support of

the economy, in the sphere of direct technical reorganization, in the sphere of increasing production and so on and so forth. Economically we have made a huge stride forward.

We have consolidated notably in the international arena, too, though contradictions of development here are making themselves felt more acutely. However, our growth has proceeded extremely unevenly and this has evoked the whole series of difficulties of which we now talk so much.

Our Party set recently a whole number of tasks which are not written out in the texts of the testament of Vladimir Ilyich.

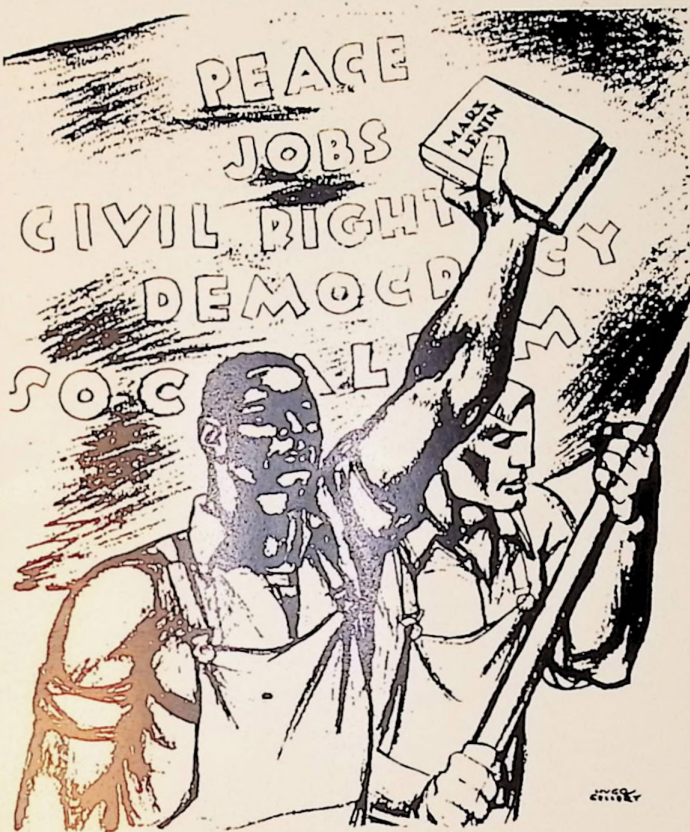
We have set the issues of collective farm construction, of state farm construction; we have set tasks of technical reconstruction—issues and tasks which Vladimir Ilyich treated only in general outline.

Many problems for us have taken on a different look. But the basic picture of our politics, of our strategy and tactics was ingeniously foretold and predetermined by Vladimir Ilyich. And those difficulties which our country and Party are now undergoing, again and again, refer us back to one of the inexhaustible sources of political wisdom, to the testament of Vladimir Ilyich, to again and again most attentively examine the main issue: the relationship between the working class and the peasantry. Since the issues of industrialization, bread, scarcity of goods and defense are the same old issues of the worker and the peasant.

Comrades, five years ago on a quiet winter day, the genius of the proletarian revolution departed us. Many of us had the good fortune to work together with that person, that iron "Old Fellow" as we called him, the leader, revolutionary and teacher.

Five years after his death, after the testing of his behests through the tough experience of life, more than ever before, with greater fervor, greater persistence and greater knowledge of activity, we raise our red banners to go onward and forward! □





# political affairs

Journal of Marxist Thought

## BOOKSTORES

where *Political Affairs* is available, along with a broad selection of books, magazines and pamphlets in all the areas of people's struggles.

LONG BEACH, CA 90804

*International Book Shop*  
4120 E. Anaheim  
☎ (213) 494-1694

S' FRANCISCO, CA 94110

*The Book Center*  
518 Valencia St.  
☎ (415) 626-2924

SAN JOSE, CA 95110

*Bread & Roses Bookshop*  
950 S. First St.  
☎ (408) 294-2930

LOS ANGELES, CA 90019

*Progressive Bookshop*  
1251 S. St. Andrews Pl.  
☎ (213) 732-8435

CHICAGO, IL 60608

*Modern Book Store*  
1642 S. Blue Island Ave.  
☎ (312) 942-0800

BALTIMORE, MD 21201

*New Era Book Shop*  
408 Park Ave.  
☎ (301) 539-6364

CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

*Ctr. for Marxist Education*  
550 Mass. Ave., 2nd fl.  
☎ (617) 868-5620

DETROIT, MI 48203

*Global Books*  
16145 Woodward Ave.  
☎ (313) 883-4940

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414

*Paul Robeson Bookshop*  
424 13th Ave. S.E.  
☎ (612) 379-2881

NEW YORK, NY 10011

*Unity Book Center*  
237 W. 23rd St.  
☎ (212) 242-2934

CLEVELAND, OH 44113

*All Peoples Books*  
4307 Lorain Ave.  
☎ (216) 281-7141

PORTLAND, OR 97215

*John Reed Bookstore*  
4314 SE Hawthorne Blvd.  
☎ (503) 239-7567

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19143

*W.E.B. DuBois Bookstore*  
601 S. 47th St.  
☎ (215) 724-2672

PITTSBURGH, PA 15224

*Carethers/Foster Bk. Ctr.*  
5024 Penn Ave.  
☎ (412) 661-3839

PROVIDENCE, RI 02905

*Center for Workers Education*  
P.O. Box 25015

SAN ANTONIO, TX 78292

*All Points of View*  
P.O. Box 321  
☎ (512) 732-6660

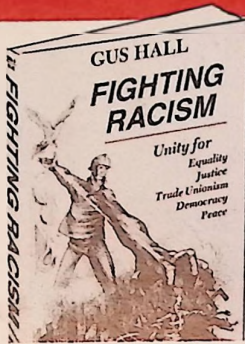
SEATTLE, WA 98122

*Co-op Books*  
1406 18th Ave.  
☎ (206) 323-5077

MILWAUKEE, WI 53203

*Forum Books*  
606 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
☎ (414) 271-2910

# Two Great Offers If You Subscribe to Political Affairs Now!



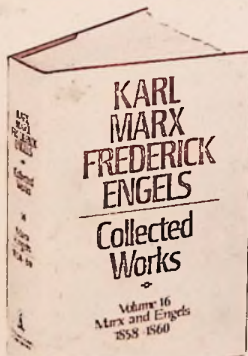
A \$15 value  
only \$7.50

## Introductory offer for new readers

One year of *Political Affairs* (regularly \$10)

**plus**

Autographed copy of *Fighting Racism*  
by Gus Hall, general secretary of the  
Communist Party, USA (regularly \$4.95)



Value over  
\$350.00  
only \$125!

## Once-in-a-lifetime combination offer

Ten years of *Political Affairs* (regularly \$100)

**plus**

All twenty one volumes published to date  
of the fifty-volume *Marx / Engels Collected  
Works* (regularly \$262.50)

(Limited to one set per subscriber)

To: *Political Affairs*, 235 West 23rd St, New York, NY 10011,

☎ (212) 989-4994

Please send me the following selection:

- Introductory sub and an autographed *Fighting Racism* for \$7.50.
- Ten year sub and 21 volumes of the *Marx/Engels Collected Works* for \$125.
- Payment enclosed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_