

political affairs

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February 1984

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Gus Hall

Class Basis of the Struggle for Equality

Carl Bloice

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A Growing Force**

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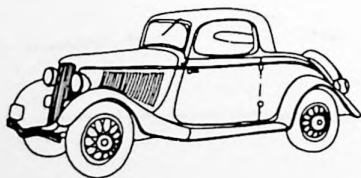
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Class Basis of the Struggle for Equality

GUS HALL

Some say that in order to understand and to know the working class it is first necessary to know its separate component parts.

It is true that it is necessary to know the component parts of the working class and the specific and unique problems they face. However, we must not, as Karl Marx warned, stand things on their head.

We must always keep in mind that what gives the working class as a whole a sense of oneness, what moves it toward class unity, what gives it class consciousness, what forces it to move to the head of the line of march, and what propels it to consider, as a class, revolutionary action, is the class exploitation at the point of production.

It is an understanding and recognition of this basic premise that must become the starting point and framework for the consideration of all questions relating to the working class and the class struggle.

The fact that we must keep emphasizing that our working class is multiracial, multinational, male-female, young and old, is itself an indication that there are special and unique problems that relate to each separate component of the class.

Therefore, the struggle against inequality is a very basic question simply because not all members of our class work and live under conditions of equality.

Afro-American Equality

The Afro-American component of our U.S. working class is exploited, as are all workers. But they are additionally discriminated against and exploited based on racism.

Black workers, men and women, are exploited on the basis of the class they are a part of. They are further exploited on the basis of race. And

they suffer many-sided discrimination because they are members of an oppressed nationality.

It is estimated that the racist cut in wages is \$70 per week, or an average of \$3,600 per year. Racism is a big factor in the fact that 20 per cent of Black workers are unemployed and that 25-30 per cent of Black workers in basic industry are unemployed. Most are suffering from long-term unemployment.

There is also a distinct pattern of racism in upgrading and job classification. The racist pattern in hiring and firing of Black workers remains in full force.

The Reagan cuts in food stamps and all social and economic programs have a special, sharp racist edge against Black workers and their families. Because of past discriminatory practices, pension, retirement and social security benefits are smaller for Black workers.

And, of course, Black workers and their families suffer from all the discrimination and racism directed against the whole Afro-American community — poor housing, education, medical and child care, cultural oppression, as well as political under-representation.

Thus, the struggle for working-class equality must begin with the struggle to eliminate the \$70 per week wage inequality. It must start by doing away with discrimination in upgrading and job classification, in hiring and firing practices.

The gap created by racist inequality is a major obstacle to working-class unity. A true measure of the class consciousness of all workers — but, in a special way, of the level of class consciousness of white workers — is the level of Black-white unity. Black-white working-class unity is a fundamental precondition for working-class unity in general. The struggle for Black-white working-class unity is key in the building of the alliances between movements and struggles.

A critical arena for the struggle must be jobs and affirmative action. The struggle for equality

The following is excerpted from the main report to the 23rd National Convention of the CPUSA.

in unionized industries can be conducted by way of affirmative action clauses in labor contracts. This must become standard for all labor contracts.

But some of the most serious racist inequalities are in unorganized industries and shops. Therefore, the struggle for equality and against racism in general raises the need for organizing the unorganized and for more binding affirmative action legislation that would be applicable to the unorganized service industries. It also raises the need for enforcing the law and increasing the minimum wage standards.

The inequalities suffered by other nationally oppressed components of our working class are all patterned after the system and essence of racism practiced against the Afro-American community. The racism against Black America feeds and is a conduit for the national oppression, discrimination and chauvinism against other nationally oppressed minorities.

The oppression that other national minorities suffer is not the same. But it is fed by and is closely connected with the racism that permeates all phases of our life.

Chicano-Mexicano Equality

The struggle for equality of the Chicano-Mexicano component of our working class is also key to working-class unity, especially in a number of regions and in some industries. About 50 per cent of Chicano-Mexicano workers are in basic industries such as metal, mining, steel and auto. And some 20 per cent are low-wage agricultural workers.

Most of the people without legal documents are also workers who work in the low-wage and largely unorganized industries. Most if not all live below the poverty level.

Therefore, the struggle for equality of the Chicano-Mexicano component of the working class must start with elimination of the wage differential. This must include the struggle to end the non-legal status of workers without documents and the struggle for their full economic, trade union, political, civil and human rights.

Puerto Rican Equality

Puerto Rican workers are another important component of the U.S. working class. The Puerto Rican people in the United States are overwhelmingly working class. They are a key sector of the class in industries like garment. They are an important sector of the working class in many industrial centers, including in some steel communities.

The result of policies of racial and national discrimination is widespread poverty. In many areas, the Puerto Rican workers are among the lowest paid and unemployment is disproportionately high.

The struggle for liberation of Puerto Rico from colonial oppression is a struggle against U.S. imperialism. Therefore, the racial and national oppression of Puerto Rican workers and people is closely linked because in both cases the class enemy is the same.

The struggle for equality of the Puerto Rican component of our working class must also start with the struggle to wipe out the wage gap and the discriminatory practices in hiring, firing, job promotion and classification.

As is the case with Chicano-Mexicano workers, the refusal of the corporations to consider using Spanish in the work place becomes an instrument of inequality. This is especially a contributing factor in the refusal to conduct bilingual classes for learning skills and trades. Bilingual classes for learning higher skills and trades must become a union contract demand.

Native American Indian Equality

The relatively smaller number of native American Indians in the U.S. work force is itself proof of the old policy of discrimination in corporate hiring.

The extreme poverty and, in some cases, total unemployment in the slums of reservations force many to move to urban centers where Native American people face the new Reagan cuts in social services. In these industrial centers they meet head-on the special, long-established corporate policies of discrimination against Native American Indian workers.

The problems faced by the native American Indian workers are closely related to the monopoly-

corporate ripoff of the energy and water resources on the reservations. Their problems are closely connected with the struggles going on for return of stolen lands. Their problems are also related to the policies of genocide, including sterilization.

Therefore, the starting point in the struggle for equality of Native American Indian workers is the struggle to put an end to the age-old ban on hiring. The goal must be to eliminate the wage gap and open the skill and trade schools to Indian workers, especially youth.

There are millions of other members of our working class who are victims of similar practices and policies of racial and national oppression. Most of them are in the low-paid, unorganized industries.

There are the people of the Philippines, the Japanese, Chinese, Korean and other Asian-Pacific workers. There are Iranians, Dominicans, Jamaicans, Haitians and others who, to one degree or another, are all victims of racial and national oppression.

Here again as a component of the working class, the starting point in the struggle for equality is a struggle to end the wage gaps, the inequalities in working and living conditions.

Women's Equality

Women have always been an important component of the U.S. working class. But as a result of the movements for women's equality, and some new laws, the number of women has constantly increased to the point where women workers now comprise nearly 50 per cent of the work force.

The inequality can be measured in terms of the wage gap and extra corporate profits. The wage gap hovers around the 50 per cent range. And in spite of their numbers, the corporate establishment in many cases continues to treat women workers as a reserve labor pool or as "temporary help." On that basis the corporations continue to resist opening up the training and educational centers for skills and job upgrading. The lack of equal facilities in the work places continue to be a special problem faced by most women workers.

Such demands as child care programs are nec-

essary in the struggle for equality of women workers. In that sense it is a class demand.

Black women workers and women workers of other nationally oppressed minorities are victims of all these inequalities, but they are also victims of a much wider wage gap. They suffer additionally from special racist discrimination and harassment on the job, in hiring and firing practices as well as promotion and job classification. Problems such as housing, child care and education reach emergency proportions for Black and other nationally oppressed women workers.

Unions must take up the special demands and needs of women workers. They must bring demands such as pay parity, penalties for harassment, provisions for affirmative action hiring, pregnancy benefits and protection and child care to the negotiating table. These are all important demands in the struggle for equality for women members of the working class.

Youth

Much of the youth component of the U.S. working class remains on the outside of the production process looking longingly in. The largest section of those working are in the unorganized, lowest-paid, light and service industries.

The overall problems faced by the young generation, such as the draft, no unemployment benefits, no pensions, lack of credit — all seriously affect the status of young workers. The declining stage of U.S. capitalism turns into hopelessness and desperation for young workers.

Young workers are responding positively and militantly wherever there are drives to organize the unorganized.

There is a need for the unions to take up the special demands of the young workers, such as unemployment benefits, which would start with an application for a job, and training for skills, but above all the demand for job.

Senior Citizens

The great majority of senior citizens are workers. They come from all components of the working class. In many cases they are the most victimized by Reaganomics. They are the first to fall through the safety net into poverty and the

least able to survive deprivation and lack of basic necessities.

The majority of the senior citizens' movements tend to gravitate toward the trade union movement. Most of them see themselves as workers who are out of a job. Therefore, the trade union movement must be convinced to see the senior citizens as workers and to fight for increases in social security as they would fight for wage increases. Thus, in a sense the anti-Reagan senior citizens movement is a component of the working-class struggle for equality.

Farmers and Agricultural Workers

A special component of the U.S. working class are the millions of agricultural workers who, in spite of organizing successes, remain largely unorganized and at the very bottom of the wage scale and working conditions.

The farm crisis and the thousands of bankruptcies, foreclosures and repossessions have ruined millions of farmers, who have been thrown into the ranks of the working class. Their struggles and movements are motivating them to link up with the trade union movement.

The struggle for equality must begin with the struggle to close the gap between agricultural and industrial workers and putting an end to the semi-feudal conditions they endure.

Within the broad perimeter of the working class there are other important components, such as teachers, scientists, technicians and high-tech workers, engineers, clerical and service workers and others. These must all be taken into account when we speak about the working class as a whole. Some of these sectors suffer from wage inequalities and poor working conditions. Most of them are unorganized.

The Unemployed

It seems almost unnecessary to say that a special component of the working class is the unemployed sector. This has increasingly become more important for three reasons:

- 1) Because the number of permanently unemployed has significantly grown because of the structural crisis and high technology.
- 2) Because such a large section of the unem-

ployed are also from components that suffer from inequality because of racism and national oppression.

3) Because of the number of young workers who have never worked who are in the ranks of the unemployed.

It is necessary to place greater importance on organizing this sector of our class. We must continue to convince the trade union movement that it is their class responsibility and in their class interest to organize the unemployed.

The foregoing is a comprehensive placement of the class struggle and the working class within it. This placement sees all questions and all components through the prism of and from the perspective of the entire class.

We have often repeated the concept of the multiracial, multinational, male-female, young-old working class. However, in our daily activities, very often we do not see things through this prism and act accordingly. Very often comrades still approach the question as if the working class is made up only of white workers and the other components as somehow separate and apart.

Obviously the foregoing does not exhaust the problems and questions relating to the different components of the working class. It is intended more as a guide, as a direction and approach to problems.

Struggle for Equality Within the Class Struggle

As you can see, I have dealt with the struggle against racial and national oppression and the struggle for equality as it is reflected within the working class, as a feature of the class struggle.

Of course this does not deal with racial and national oppression fully. It does not deal with the racial and national oppression of people. And, in that sense, this is not a substitute for dealing with broader questions of racial and national oppression.

But what is most important is that it does deal with the basic class roots of racial and national oppression. This way of placing the question takes into consideration a number of factors.

The great majority of the racially and nationally oppressed are workers and therefore compo-

nents of the working class. So, even in the sense of numbers, we are dealing with the great majority of the racially and nationally oppressed.

Placing the question in this context more clearly lays bare the essence of the role and responsibilities of the trade union movement and the working class in the struggle for equality, since the greatest inequalities originate in the work place.

This framework correctly makes the connections between our emphasis on the working class, the concentration on workers in the basic mass production industries and the struggle for equality.

This lays the basis for a better understanding of the key role of Black-white unity. I think it makes it easier to show concretely and convince white workers why they must take on the struggle for equality, that it is a struggle for equality in their class.

On this basis it is easier to see the absolute necessity to develop working-class consciousness as an important ingredient in the struggle for equality.

This emphasis lays the foundation for the unity of racially and nationally oppressed peoples with the working class.

I think it makes clearer the necessity for the working class to seek and work for unity with the oppressed minorities.

It places a needed emphasis on the economics of racism — its relationship to corporate profits and to class exploitation. It places the capitalist system as the root and ultimate source of all racism.

As its class consciousness deepens, the working class and the trade union movement will see

itself more clearly as a class. It will fight for the interests of the class more consistently. It will see more clearly that the problems are rooted in class exploitation.

However, as this consciousness deepens the working class must learn that to be able to fight for the best interests of the whole class it must take on the special struggle against all the inequalities faced by the different components of the working class.

I think this approach more clearly focuses on the special and unique contributions that Communists must make in the struggle for equality.

I think this framework also provides a stronger foundation for and an added dimension to the general human, civil and moral aspects of the struggle for equality.

Because the cause is just and because it is in its class interest, the trade union movement must be convinced to accept as its major responsibility the struggle for equality for all components of the working class in every area of life.

This can become a firm basis for the struggle against racism, national oppression and chauvinism in all areas of life — in housing, in public education, in medical and child care, in social services and political representation.

The position of the working class in the line of march continues to change. There have been significant advances since our last convention. Our class has moved closer to the front of the line.

This should not surprise us. We should expect it. We should hail and nurture it. But, above all, we should understand the significance of it.

We must view all these developments from a rose-colored, partisan, class perspective.

The Black Vote — A Growing Force

CARL BLOICE

At the end of last year, *Focus*, monthly publication of the Joint Center for Political Studies, observed that, "During the past 12 months, the Black vote has been endowed with a respect long sought after but never before received." What followed was a description of what, in the opinion of the editor at the Black think tank, are reasons the Black vote "now looms as the wild card or 'X' factor in the 1984 elections."

The JCPS officials are correct in noting that the factors leading to the current dramatic upsurge in Black political activity includes: "Reaganomics, Black candidates, voter mobilization programs. . . ." And the Center analysts have added another, decisive factor to the equation: "the quiet determination of Blacks to use the political process as a vehicle for self-help, social change and economic survival."

It should be noted that with the exception of the continuing threat to the Black community from the policies and actions of the Reagan Administration, all the reasons cited for the upsurge of interest in the potential of Black political action have existed, in one respect or another, through the entire post-World War II period. Indeed, Black voting strength was recognized as important in each presidential election since 1948, when it played a decisive role in the election of President Harry S. Truman. The importance of Black voting power has grown significantly since passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1968, an event which also began a radical transformation of the political landscape of the country's Southern region.

The capitalist Democratic Party owes its post-war political success to a combination of factors, the most decisive of which has been the allegiance of the organized labor movement and the consistent support from Black people and their mass organizations and institutions. The Black

people's movement has always attempted to utilize the electoral process as a means of achieving its goals of equality and economic and social advance. That is not a phenomenon of 1983 alone.

JCPS President Eddie Williams gives the credit for the upswing in Black political activity to forces operating "in the bosom of the community," not controlled by the candidates, the parties or the successive regimes in Washington. He notes that, "when we decide to sharpen our political participation as the new cutting edge of the civil rights movement, we become a force to be reckoned with."

There is something which this analysis does not say explicitly and which has important implications not only for the Black struggle for equality but also for the labor movement and other minority, democratic and social movements as well. That point is that a determination to "use the political process" for larger gains takes on greater meaning when it is translated into action that is independent of the existing establishment political machinery, radical in the sense of challenging basic political and economic assumptions which underlie the status quo, and which challenges the prerogatives or assumptions of the major monopoly corporate interests that do, in fact, control the nation's political life.

The decision or decisions to "sharpen our political participation" that have had the most impact have been those that reflect varying degrees of political independence. For the most part, this has involved disputing, rather than obediently accepting, the consensus line of the Democratic Party, and asserting with maturity the right to exercise leadership on the full range of pressing issues facing Black people, other minorities and the nation as a whole — from ecology to civil liberties to defense.

There is no question that much of the power —

Carl Bloice is editor of the *People's World*.

actual and potential — of the Black electorate flows from its real and potential ballot weight, especially in key geographical areas. This owes something to the unique, historically-derived structure of U.S. government. For instance, presidential elections can be decided on the basis of electoral college votes cast by major industrial states in which the Black population is concentrated. Add to this the fact that a historical turning point has been reached in the politics of the South. Instead of automatically viewing the Southern states only as bastions of racism and reaction across the board, political observers now look to the South to determine what effects the mostly newly-enfranchised Black voters will have on the political life of the nation.

Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the picture shaping up this year of Democratic presidential candidates aggressively vying for the pre-primary endorsement of the Black Democrats of Alabama. The Alabama Democratic conference is in 1984 as much a bellwether of the future as are the New Hampshire primary and the Iowa caucuses. This is true whether or not the ADC's endorsement of former Vice-President Walter Mondale is confirmed by the Alabama presidential primary March 13, 1984.

However, the importance of Black numerical voting strength and its strategic location must always be balanced against the relative size of the total Black population. Black people constitute over 20 per cent of the population in only 86 of the country's 435 congressional districts. Many important and politically powerful Black elected officials are from districts or wards that are not majority Black. A number of Black mayors come from cities that are not majority Black or even majority non-white.

Therefore, the source of strength of the Black voting population and the attention it is receiving in 1984 must go beyond numbers. Actually, the central source of current Black political power lies in the quality and content of that Black political participation. A key element here is that Black political and community activists and leaders have become quite effective coalition builders. And regardless of what differences might exist on

one level or another of the political process in the nation, the key effective coalitions have involved Black participation in tandem with the organized labor movement.

In area after area, the Black community and the trade unions have been the backbone and mainstay of what liberal Democratic coalitions exist. The problem, until now, has been that for the most part both groups have sat in on the meetings but had very little to do with drawing up the agenda. Rather than being an independent force, both labor and the Black community have been dependent elements taking leadership from the machine politicians and representatives of the corporate interests that do, in fact, run and control the Democratic Party.

A key element in the dramatic developments around the 1984 presidential elections has been the halting, yet definite, moves by both labor and the Black community toward an assertion of independent power. Limited as these steps are, they have long-term significance. For labor this independence has taken the form of the decision to make a presidential endorsement prior to the national primaries and the Democratic Party national convention. In the Black community, independence within the framework of the Democratic Party has taken the form of the historic presidential primary campaign of the Black leader Rev. Jesse Jackson.

A number of elements have entered the picture over recent years that have helped to shape a new direction for Black political action and resulted in the Black vote today being "endowed with a respect long sought after but never yet received." Among these developments are the following:

First, the growing and historically important tendency of Black leadership to break with the bipartisan Cold War consensus that has been a central feature of the stance of the Democratic Party throughout the past three and a half decades.

Of course, there are those in the Black community who agree with the anti-Communist, confrontational approach to the socialist world and who have supported the numerous imperialist wars of aggression which have pitted the U.S. against the movements for national liberation

from Vietnam to Palestine to Nicaragua. But they are few in number. Rather, what has existed up until recently been a tacit assumption that silence on matters of foreign policy is a price Black people have to pay for the participation in the civil rights coalition of Cold War liberals and supporters of Israeli expansionism. That has at times taken the absurd form of Black people actually being told that foreign wars or foreign policy were not something over which they should be concerned — even while Black youth perished in disproportionate numbers in foreign military adventures.

In the 1950s this enforced Cold War “consensus” resulted in the victimization and attempted isolation of Communist, Left and progressive Black leaders who refused to go along, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Paul Robeson, Benjamin Davis, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and Dr. Martin Luther, Jr.

Factors making for independent foreign policy views being expressed in the Black community include pressure from the masses of Black people, the movement of Black political and community figures into positions of importance in the world peace movement, the recognition of the link between U.S. imperialism and racist repression in Southern Africa and the advanced and courageous stand of most members of the Congressional Black Caucus, who have rightfully assumed their responsibility to deal with all issues.

A second factor heightening the influence of Black political activity is the more conscious effort on the part of Black political forces to develop organized, long-term strategic alliances with other minorities, especially the Hispanic community.

The growth of Black political alliances with forces in other ethnic communities over the past few years has been phenomenal. It has contributed directly to significant electoral victories of Blacks and Hispanics, such as the mayoral elections of Harold Washington in Chicago, Wilson Goode in Philadelphia and Francisco Peña in Denver. It has recently been expressed in the form of support groups for the Jackson presidential campaign among Hispanic, Arab American and Asian-Pacific peoples.

Third, Black political leadership has increas-

ingly spoken to the needs and demands of other sectors of the population, including women, seniors, farmers, environmentalists, the disabled, etc.

This is a logical, almost preordained, development. As Black people began to define independently and in clear-cut terms an agenda reflecting their most pressing needs, it became increasingly clear that that agenda had to address itself to the needs of the majority of people of the nation and to the special needs of those others who suffer most the poverty and economic deprivation caused by present economic policies. These are the people who, to use Jesse Jackson’s term, are “disenfranchised” — that is, people who, by themselves, lack sufficient political weight to prevail, even minimally, over the corporate power that dominates the nation’s policy-making process.

In addition, Black women suffer doubly from what has become known as “the feminization of poverty.” Black seniors find themselves nearly at the bottom of the economic ladder, often leading lives of sheer desperation. Black farmers are being pushed off the land by the banks and food conglomerates. And, from the poisoning of the atmosphere to the deterioration of the infrastructure of urban areas, Blacks feel a disproportionate share of the harm that comes from corporate greed and the befouling of the environment.

The factors catapulting Black political forces into the position of articulators of important mass political concerns and demands — illustrated again by the wide response the Jackson candidacy has evoked far beyond the Black community — are fundamental; they have relevance for future political developments in the country. They speak directly to the concept of the centrality of the struggle for Black equality, as postulated over the years by the Communist Party, USA.

The advanced positions on international matters, the demands for radical and fundamental alteration in economic and political structures and in the workings of the nation’s institutions, and the alliances with other oppressed and disadvantaged people flow directly from the position of

Black people in the political economy of the U.S. in the period of state monopoly capitalism.

CPUSA National Chairman Henry Winston has observed that Black people in the U.S. are objectively anti-monopoly. That is, the interests of Black people as a whole lie not in the expansion of the control of monopoly power and financial empires over the economic and political life of the country, but in precisely an opposite direction. This fact flows directly from the overwhelmingly working-class character of Black people.

Black people are in the main an integral part of the multiracial, multinational, U.S. working class of men and women. Their special oppression results from their superexploitation by monopoly capitalism and the pervasive racism that has been fostered by the exploiters since the time of slavery. Objectively, the interests of Black people are the same as those of the working class as whole. Victory over racism has become one of the most critical tasks to be accomplished as a prerequisite to forging unbreakable class unity in the face of the anti-working-class monopoly offensive and the reactionary course fostered by Reaganism.

The defeat of Reaganism has become the key and indispensable task for the movements for Black equality and for equality of other oppressed peoples, for the labor movement and for other democratic forces. The need for unity in this struggle must be constantly underscored.

Beyond that lies the path to true political independence from the two monopoly-dominated parties and the evolution of a powerful coalition of forces, uniting most especially the Black community and the working class as a whole. Only such a coalition can adequately express the growing willingness of masses of people to confront monopoly power, to fight to reverse the current dangerous course in international relations and

to struggle for economic justice, democratic advance and political freedom at home.

In his report to the 23rd Convention of the CPUSA, General Secretary Gus Hall observed, "the 1984 elections will be different from all others in U.S. history. Defeat of Reaganism has emerged as the single overriding challenge to everyone. All electoral politics from now until November 1984 will influence the outcome in one way or another." Hall then took note of the special role being played by Black political forces in this year's election, asserting that the outcome of the election "will not be decided within the old two-party structure" because "the broad all-people's independent forces have outgrown the perimeters of the old party machines."

"Jesse Jackson's candidacy . . . adds a new dimension to political independence," Hall observed. "It will force all the candidates to deal with some of the real issues. The candidacy of Jesse Jackson, the decision of the AFL-CIO convention, the action of some of the women's organizations and others all add up to a new level of political independence."

An important and critical contribution to the movement for political independence and to raising and clarifying the issues necessary to defeat Reaganism will be made by the Communist Party campaign for the ticket of Gus Hall for president and Black scholar and leader Angela Davis for vice-president. Regardless of which bourgeois politicians end up challenging Reagan for the presidency, the Hall-Davis campaign will continue to raise the critical and long-range questions in the midst of the political debate between now and November. Only Hall and Davis will speak truthfully about the crisis in the country and the world and present a program that speaks meaningfully and realistically to the interests of all working people and the forces of peace.

Anti-Slavery Societies in the United States

MANFRED WIBICH and URS WINTER

Remember them that are in bonds,
as bound with them;
and them which suffer adversity,
as being yourselves also in the body.(1)

One hundred and fifty years ago, on December 4, 1833, some sixty to seventy persons from nine states of the USA met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and founded the American Anti-Slavery Society, one of the most important popular initiatives in the history of the country.

The organization grew very rapidly, supported by numerous local and statewide societies: In 1834 it already counted 60 societies, in 1835 a total of about 200. In the year 1836 the number rose to 527, in 1837 to 1,000 and in 1838 to 1,350 organized units with a total estimated membership of 250,000 belonging to the national society. The society's income grew from \$1,000 in 1834 to \$47,000 in 1840.

Although later studies have treated one or the other detail with more exactitude, it seems to us that a passage in William Z. Foster's *The Negro People in American History* gives an excellent overall picture of the situation in which this "child" was born and grew up:

Numerous factors combined to produce the militant American Anti-Slavery Society at this time and to make it strong. Cotton production was rapidly expanding — it had gone up from 3,000 bales in 1790 to 732,000 in 1830 — and with this growth came a broad extension of slavery. The conditions of the slaves were steadily worsening; insurrections and other forms of slave protest and revolt were multiplying; a widespread Abolitionist spirit was developing among the people, and the fight was sharpening in Congress to have the new states coming

into the Union bar slavery within their confines. Important events abroad were also operating to stimulate the anti-slavery movement in the United States. Among these was the huge Revolution of 1810-25 throughout the far-flung Spanish-American colonies, from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. This revolution had unleashed a movement that gradually was freeing the slaves all over this vast area. Also many slave insurrections were breaking out in Brazil, Cuba, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Demerara, and elsewhere — events which were not without repercussions in the United States. Especially important, too, was the decision of England in 1833 to free its slaves in the West Indies, a law which went into effect in 1838. This step deeply influenced the American anti-slavery movement. There were also bourgeois revolutions in a number of European countries — Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Poland and elsewhere. This was a period of revolutions. One of the basic developments accompanying this consolidation of world capitalism was the emancipation of Negro chattel slaves. At this time it became definitely a world movement.(2)

The driving force in the setting up of the American Anti-Slavery Society was a small group of about 12 persons from Massachusetts who had already formed the New England Anti-Slavery Society in Boston on January 6, 1832, under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison. Since Garrison's name is inseparably linked with the agitation against slavery in the U.S., it is appropriate to recall briefly something of his life prior to the historic meeting in Philadelphia.

Garrison was born in Newburyport, Mass., in December 1805. Three years after his birth his father deserted the mother and three children, never to return. Garrison grew up practically without parents, since his mother was unable to care for all three children single-handedly and decided to move with the daughter to Baltimore,

Manfred Wibich and Urs Winter are writers from the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland. They have written numerous articles on problems of the struggle for human rights.

Maryland, where she took a job as a nurse. Garrison and his brother stayed behind and went through difficult times. Following two unsuccessful attempts as an apprentice — once with a cobbler and once with a cabinet maker — young Garrison learned the printer's trade and later became an editor. During the period 1825-1829 Garrison was associated with three different newspapers in New England. He proved to be a relentless opponent of Andrew Jackson, but showed no signs at all of being a committed reformer. At the time one might have rather expected him to choose the career of a conservative politician.

In early 1829 the Quaker, Benjamin Lundy, sought out Garrison in Vermont. Lundy, already involved in the abolitionist movement, wanted to publish an anti-slavery newspaper with headquarters in Baltimore and asked Garrison to help him as joint editor in this venture. Garrison accepted Lundy's offer, and the first number of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*(3) appeared in September 1829. In this Garrison and Lundy explained to their readers how they envisaged their work together; e.g., each would sign his commentary with his own name. They also informed the readers that they had different conceptions of the struggle against slavery: Garrison advocated immediate and unconditional emancipation, Lundy gradual emancipation.

After two years of working together the two men separated and the 25-year-old Garrison founded a paper named *The Liberator* with Isaak Knapp in Boston; the first number appeared on January 1, 1831. The tone taken by Garrison was entirely new. Up until then caution, tact, consideration and compromise had been the means used to further abolitionist activity. Doing away with slavery was indeed the declared goal of many, but so far no strategy directed toward a hard struggle had been worked out; nor had the necessary combat troops been organized. As certain abolitionists remarked in an 1821 report: "The best method is still a question. We cannot expect a speedy accomplishment of that event."(4) Garrison, by contrast, spoke aggressively and clearly and demanded total abolition of the institution of slavery: "I am in earnest — I

will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — AND I WILL BE HEARD."(5)

In the course of his journalistic activity in the year 1832, Garrison realized that the opponents of slavery would have to organize themselves on local, statewide, federal and international levels to exercise optimal moral pressure on the slave breeders, dealers and owners. In November 1851, he began, together with others, to lay the foundations of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. After the formal establishment of this organization at the beginning of 1832, it became obvious that not only the enslaved Blacks in the South, but also the free Blacks in the North needed help. Garrison was sent to England "for the purpose of procuring funds to aid in the establishment of the proposed *manual labor school for colored youth*, and of disseminating in that country the truth in relation to American Slavery."(6)

From May to October, 1833, Garrison lived outside the United States, especially in England, where he delivered a great number of speeches against slavery. The American public learned of this and cries of betrayal of the homeland were raised. When Garrison arrived in New York City upon his return he was received by a group of angry Americans. The same thing happened a few days later in Boston.

At this time some people in the state of New York joined together to make a common front against slavery at home. Of decisive influence in this group were the brothers Lewis and Arthur Tappan, who belonged to the upper class of their region. Early in 1833, Arthur Tappan founded a newspaper, *The Emancipator*, which reflected the position of abolitionists not fully advocating the radical elimination of slavery — in a "plodding and uninspired style," as one of Lewis Tappan's biographers, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, puts it.(7) Charles Denison, who edited *The Emancipator*, interpreted Arthur Tappan's goal as follows: "the claim of property of men shall be forever and entirely set aside, *by the operation of public opinion on the slave laws under its control*."(8) Tappan and Denison wanted to believe that persuasion would be more effective than pub-

lic condemnation in winning over the Christian slaveowners — on whom Tappan set his hopes.

At the latest in September 1833, Arthur Tappan found the time ripe to establish an anti-slavery organization to operate within the state of New York. Previous to this he had already assumed the printing and distribution costs of *The Emancipator*, the over 7,600 copies of which were sent to ministers in the Northern states. In addition he financed John Greenleaf Whittier's *Justice and Expediency* and apparently covered a part of Garrison's travel expenses to England.

On October 2, 1833, the New York Anti-Slavery Society was constituted in Chatham Chapel in New York City and Arthur Tappan was elected president. The initial meeting did not last long, since pro-slavery elements calling themselves "patriots" stormed the meeting hall and forced the assembled abolitionists to flee.

When the American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in Philadelphia two months later, Lewis Tappan represented the family; Arthur stayed at home. Arthur, undoubtedly the wealthiest man among the abolitionists, became president of the organization and chairman of the executive committee, Lewis a member of the same committee. Except for Garrison, who was appointed secretary for foreign correspondence, all those elected to the executive committee lived in the city of New York, not least so as to facilitate the functioning of the society, since long-distance travel and communication were then very time-consuming. The official organ of the society was called the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.

Garrison at once informed the English abolitionists of the American Anti-Slavery Society's constituent assembly and received the reply: "The excellent Constitution you have adopted, and the judicious choice of your officers, with that indefatigably devoted, great and good man, Arthur Tappan, as your President . . . , gives assurance that you must conquer."(9)

Before entering into more detail about this constitution we would note that women, too, took part in the constituent assembly of the American Anti-Slavery Society and spoke during the discussions. At least one of these (four) women, Lucretia Mott, played an outstanding role in the

anti-slavery and women's suffrage movements.

Several free Blacks also took part as delegates in the historic Philadelphia meeting, 3 among them counting among the 62 signers of the "Declaration of Sentiments." Among the Black delegates, James G. Barbadoes of Massachusetts, Peter Williams, Jr. of New York, Robert Purvis, James C. McCrummell, John B. Vashon and Abraham D. Shadd of Pennsylvania were members of the board of managers.

James G. Barbadoes owned a clothing business in Boston and became a member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's board of counselors in 1834.

Peter Williams, Jr. was pastor of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in New York City. It was said of him that he "was always in trouble about other people's troubles."(10) As early as January 1, 1808, Williams had become widely known to the New York City public when he gave a speech celebrating the prohibition against importing slaves into the U.S., which took effect on that date. Williams was also, among other things, a member of the board of directors of the Phoenix Society, a Black self-help organization also founded in 1833. When opponents of the very efficiently organized abolitionists destroyed St. Philip's Church, Bishop Benjamin Onderdenk, under whom Williams served, demanded that he give up his activity in the American Anti-Slavery Society and devote himself exclusively to his pastoral duties.

Williams obeyed and wrote a justification which he later published. In this document Williams gave his readers an idea of how difficult it was to work in a committed way against slavery and at the same time to take the professional and economic realities necessary for survival sufficiently into account. Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease have written about this in their book *They Who Would Be Free*:

In an effort to maintain his following, he pointed out that he had resigned only from the executive committee, not from the society. At the same time he tried to appease the bishop by denying that he had ever been active in the society. A thoroughly unsatisfactory resolution, it nonetheless spoke eloquently to the perennial problem of competing loyalties.(11)

Robert Purvis was a very well-to-do merchant from Philadelphia. He gave financial support to the January 1833 founding of the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons, which made 600 books available by 1840. In 1838 he wrote as principal author the *Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens Threatened With Disfranchisement, to the People of Pennsylvania*. The free Blacks were threatened with the loss of the franchise in a forthcoming public vote. In this detailed written protest against the planned vote, Purvis described the history of the Blacks in Pennsylvania and called the readers' attention to the free Blacks' high sense of responsibility:

We freely acknowledge our brotherhood to the slave, and our interest in his welfare. Is this a crime for which we should be ignominiously punished? The very fact that we are deeply interested in our kindred in bonds shows that we are the right sort of stuff to make good citizens. Were we not so, we should better deserve a lodging in your penitentiaries than a franchise at your polls.(12)

The appeal was unsuccessful as far as the result of the vote was concerned. The voters went to the polls and decided that Blacks should no longer have the franchise. Later, from 1845 to 1850, Purvis held office as president of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. He also worked in the Underground Railroad, an organized network which permitted many thousands of slaves to find freedom through flight, and his country estate was one of the well-known stations. Purvis made an especially forceful and unequivocal public appearance when he spoke before hundreds of Black mourners in the National Hall in Philadelphia on December 2, 1859, on the occasion of the execution of the great fighter for emancipation, John Brown (on "martyr's day," as some Black abolitionists called it).

Dr. James C. McCrummell, a dentist, often presided over abolitionist business meetings. He chaired, for example, the morning meeting at the American Anti-Slavery Society's constituent assembly on December 5, 1833.

John B. Vashon, a hairdresser by trade and the

owner of his own shop in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ran a branch office of *The Liberator*. He was Garrison's main patron in the initial years of the newspaper. He also supported *The Emancipator* at the same time, however, and was even one of this paper's four official Black representatives. In January 1832, Vashon became president of the African Education Society in Pittsburgh. The school, in which only Blacks acted as teachers, was conceived as a self-help association and was attended by "many of the respectable colored people" of the city.(13) Later, in the 1850s, Vashon led the attempts made in Pittsburgh to buy freedom for runaway slaves.

Abraham D. Shadd was also among the official representatives of *The Liberator* and *The Emancipator*, residing in the vicinity of Philadelphia. Relatively well-off, but by no means as wealthy as Purvis, he took part in the Underground Railroad, assisting slaves to flee from the South to the North. His daughter, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, later devoted herself in an impressive way to the struggle for equal rights for women in Black abolitionist groups. She favored emigration to Canada and settled in Chatham, Ontario.

The meetings at the constituent assembly of the American Anti-Slavery Society took place at Adelphi Hall, and the city fathers required that they be completed before nightfall. The participants as well as the building were in danger of being attacked by a pro-slavery mob.

To draft, discuss, possibly revise and finally approve a Declaration of Sentiments and a Constitution were among the participants' main tasks. The Declaration of Sentiments, put to paper by Garrison in the house of his host, the delegate James McCrummell, on the evening before the last meetings of the constituent assembly, received the approval of the gathered abolitionists. The members of the new organization promised:

We shall organize anti-slavery societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land.

We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty and rebuke.

We shall circulate unsparingly and extensively anti-slavery tracts and periodicals.(14)

The Constitution, as finally accepted, also formulated largely by Garrison, counted ten articles, of which articles II, III and IV are particularly noteworthy for all who are concerned with human rights. They read as follows:

ART. II — The object of this Society is the entire abolition of Slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State, in which Slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in said State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that Slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its *immediate abandonment*, without expatriation [to Africa]. The Society will also endeavor, in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic Slave trade, and to abolish Slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia, — and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union.

ART. III — This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice, that thus they may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges; but this Society will never in any way countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.

ART. IV — Any person who consents to the principles of this Constitution, who contributes to the funds of this Society, and is not a Slaveholder, may be a member of this Society, and shall be entitled to vote at the meetings.(15)

The ten articles of the constitution were preceded by a preamble reading as follows:

Whereas the Most High God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," and hath commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves; and whereas, our National

Existence is based upon this principle, as recognized in the Declaration of Independence, "that all mankind are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; and whereas, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, since the faith and honor of the American people were pledged to this avowal, before Almighty God and the World, nearly one-sixth part of the nation are held in bondage by their fellow-citizens; and whereas, Slavery is contrary to the principles of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion, and is destructive of the prosperity of the country, while it is endangering the peace, union and liberties of the States; and whereas, we believe it the duty and interest of the masters immediately to emancipate their slaves, and that no scheme of expatriation, either voluntary or by compulsion, can remove this great and increasing evil; and whereas, we believe that it is practicable, by appeals to the consciences, hearts, and interests of the people, to awaken a public sentiment throughout the nation that will be opposed to the continuance of Slavery in any part of the Republic, and by effecting the speedy abolition of Slavery, prevent a general convulsion; and whereas, we believe we owe it to the oppressed, to our fellow-citizens who hold slaves, to our whole country, to posterity, and to God, to do all that is lawfully in our power to bring about the extinction of Slavery, we do hereby agree, with a prayerful reliance on the Divine aid, to form ourselves into a society.(16)

For the Blacks of those days, whether slave or free, the birth of this abolitionist society on the national level meant a shining hope, and most of them greeted it with great thankfulness. No sooner had the delegates departed from Philadelphia than a young Black woman writing under the name "Ada" composed a poem concluding with these words:

Their works shall live when other deeds
Which ask a nation's fame,
Have sunk beneath Time's whelming wave
Unhonored and unnamed.(17)

(Continued on page 40)

Marxist Theory of 'The Negro Question'

NATIONAL COMMITTEE, CPUSA

Twenty-five years ago, the National Committee of the Communist Party USA adopted a resolution which represented a milestone in the scientific analysis of the struggle of the Afro-American people for equality. The formulations it contains provide many of the underpinnings of the Marxist conception of the question to this day.

The drafting and adoption of this seminal document were accompanied by very extensive research, discussion and debate, and contained the best collective estimate of the Marxist-Leninist forces of the USA. It was presented to the CPUSA National Committee by James E. Jackson, then Secretary for Southern and Negro Affairs.

For reasons of space, portions of the original resolution have been omitted. These include extensive documentation of the trends in geographical distribution of the Black population; the forms and extent of economic deprivation and superexploitation in Black people in wages, housing and other living conditions; and policy sections outlining program and tasks in connection with the struggle for Afro-American equality. For additional material see the October 1958 and January 1959 Political Affairs.

The Editors

U.S. capitalism's more "efficient" and thoroughgoing super-exploitation of its "internal colonial caste" of Negro masses has transformed the Negro people from primarily an exploited peasantry into a most productive base of super-profit — into basically an exploited and oppressed working people. It is this working class stratum of the Negro people — dominant for the people as a whole and constantly increasing in the South as well — which will progressively stamp the Negro people's freedom movement with its own image. The high proportion of the Negro people who are working people means that the Negro freedom movement will increasingly reflect in its program, policies, leadership, alliances, and immediate and long-range goals the influence and will of the working class. This is a feature in the prospects for development of the Negro liberation movement which is quite different from that usually associated with national movements of colonial economies wherein the weight of the petty bourgeois peasant class groupings is very heavy if not decisive. The proportionate numerical strength of the class forces within the Negro movement is decisively on the side of the workers. This circumstance favors that ultimate dominance of the policies of the working

class and the leadership of the working class in the Negro people's movement which is indispensable for the triumph of the cause of Negro liberation over all manner of oppression.

As Lenin observed:

The world-wide experience of bourgeois and landlord governments had developed two methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence . . . But there is another method . . . That is the method of deception, flattery, fine phrases, numberless promises, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential . . . But from day to day trustful naivete and naive trustfulness will diminish, especially among the proletarians and poor peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists. (*Selected Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 51-52).

This key fact, in the final analysis, will determine the basic orientation and ultimate character of the Negro people's movement for equal rights and national liberation. It will propel that movement in the direction of conscious anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, anti-capitalist struggle in combination with and under the leadership of the working class.

At the present stage of its development, the Negro people's movement puts forth a program of elementary democratic demands for equality of citizenship rights, economic opportunities, and social justice. It struggles against all forms of racial segregation and discrimination, and demands full political, economic, and social equality for Negroes as individual citizens and as a people. It seeks to organize the united strength of the whole Negro people of all classes in active struggle for these immediate common demands. Likewise it strives to enroll the active participation and support of the broadest strata of white people in the struggle for these equal rights demands of the Negro people.

The common bondage of racial and national oppression to which the whole of the Negro people are subjected makes possible the coalition of the diverse class strata of the Negro people in struggle for their freedom.

The Working Class. The *working-class stratum* of the Negro population is the first and the most important of the social forces which make up the Negro people's movement.

* The workers are the most numerous stratum of the Negro people, which is constantly increasing its proportion in the total Negro population as the petty bourgeois class stratum of the rural masses suffers decline.

* The social action of the Negro workers is the most potent force in that the Negro workers, like their white class brothers, are strategically positioned at the very vitals of the oppressing capitalist production system — in the mines, mills and factories.

* The Negro workers are an integral part of the U.S. working class — brothers with the white workers in toil and struggle against capitalist exploitation. Not only do the Negro workers seek the support of the working class for the struggle of the Negro people for equal rights and freedom from national and racial oppression, but they are an important, integral part of the working class, being 11 per cent of all industrial workers — 25 per cent of the miners, 30 per cent of the packing-house workers, 15 per cent of the steel and auto workers, 45 per cent of the lumber workers, etc. — and consequently are able to help insure the participation of large sections of the working

class in the Negro people's freedom struggles.

Because of their dual identity — with the struggles and aspirations of the Negro people for freedom from national and racial oppression, on the one hand, and with the struggles and aspirations of the working class for freedom from capitalist exploitation and political domination, on the other, the Negro workers represent that numerically dominant force within the Negro people's movement which insures the correlation, the partnership, the development of ever more profound relations of alliance and solidarity between the Negro people's movement and the working-class movement, presently on issues of immediate interest and ultimately on questions of strategic objectives.

There is no greater task for the Communists and advanced workers to fulfill in connection with the working class than that of furthering the bonds of class unity and brotherhood between Negro and white workers. At all times Communists must stand in the forefront of the struggle to smash every remaining color bar and anti-Negro prejudice, practice, or manifestation of racial prejudices in the trade unions and other working-class organizations. Communists must always stand forth as tireless fighters for the integration of Negro workers on the basis of full equality in the life and affairs of the trade unions. Communists must ceaselessly work to influence the trade unions to struggle for full equality in job rights in all branches of industry for the Negro workers — in terms of employment, equal pay for equal work, job classification, upgrading, training and promotion; to put an end to all racial exclusiveness in the employment and job classification practices in the industries and enterprises. Communists must be outstanding in influencing and sharing in the completion of the urgent work of the labor movement to organize the millions of the labor movement to organize the millions of unorganized Negro and white workers — particularly in the South — into the trade unions.

Communists must be tireless in organizing and stimulating the labor movement to champion the freedom demands of the Negro people, and to render every material and moral support to the concrete struggles of the Negro people for political, economic and social equality and freedom from national oppression, segregation, disfran-

chisement and discrimination.

The Rural Masses. A most important class stratum of the Negro people is the toiling farmers and farm toilers —that grouping of class forces who make up the Negro "peasantry," the toiling masses of agrarians.

The organized struggles of these rural Negro masses in united and parallel actions with the toiling white farmers, for land, livelihood and liberty from the oppressive yoke of the plantation system, are a powerful force of the Negro people's movement.

The further development and fullest unfolding of this agrarian front of struggle for democratic land reform is a basic task and indispensable condition for major advancement on the road to victory for the Negro people's movement.

The Urban Middle Class. That stratum of the Negro population which is of the urban middle class is indeed a small percentage of the total Negro people. Yet, individuals from this stratum play an uncommonly important role in the democratic national front of the Negro people's movement. The professionals and small business people — by virtue of their great articulateness and technical proficiency — largely dominate the leadership of the various organizations which constitute the Negro people's movement at the present time. This segment of Negro people in the main live in much more favorable material circumstances than the masses of the Negro workers and farm toilers. However, when compared with the status of the urban middle class strata of white people — in every category — the Negroes are bound down in an inferior and unequal status by a fierce pattern of discrimination, segregation, and racial and national oppression.

The positive and valuable role which the Negro stratum of the urban middle class plays in the cause of the struggle for Negro rights flows from the discrimination visited upon Negroes in this stratum. However, their role within the Negro people's movement is neither uniformly progressive nor consistent, for they also represent the propertied and higher income strata of the Negro people and, hence, all the conservative and compromising influences that are associated with the protection of vested property interest which are

vulnerable to the pressures of the banks and big business dictation.

The middle class stratum of the Negro people will remain a very significant associated component of the social base of the Negro liberation movement. However, the present dominance of its policies and leadership in the Negro people's movement is a temporary phenomenon; eventually it must give way to the leadership and policies of the mass class of the Negro people, that is, the workers.

The Negro Capitalists. That segment of the Negro population which is in the status of capitalists number only several thousands. They are found in the category of small capitalists largely limited to the service fields of enterprise — that is, insurance, small loan companies, undertaking establishments, tonsorial enterprises, newspapers and magazines. There are no Negro industrial capitalists engaged in manufacturing of commodities on a large scale. Only a fraction of one per cent of the total number of Negro working people are exploited as wage earners in the enterprises of sizeable Negro capitalists.

In addition to all the general problems besetting small capitalists in an economy geared to the interests of and dominated by the big monopolists, the Negro capitalists also fall under the yoke of national and racial discrimination. Their investment opportunities are largely limited to that segment of the Negro consumer and service market which the white monopolists have not elected to seize. In matters of securing bank credits, marketing of their products or services, securing licenses and franchises to do business, acquiring necessary types of insurance for their enterprises, etc., the Negro capitalists confront barriers of national exclusion and race discrimination on every hand. Although there are a token number of "mixed-capital" enterprises (that is, Negro and white investors) operated by Negro capitalists, generally speaking, no Negro compradore bourgeoisie exists; the Negro market is exploited directly by the big white merchants and capitalists, and not through the agency of Negro "compradores" as is often the case in colonial countries.

All of these circumstances — plus the basic one, that Negro capitalists and wealthy individuals enjoy no favored social amenities or freedom

from racist oppression, which is the common lot of all Negroes in the United States, regardless of class status — sustain the antagonisms and contradictions between the Negro capitalist and the dominant sector of the monopoly capitalist class.

Under the leadership of the Negro workers, the Negro people's movement can enroll the larger part of the Negro capitalist stratum into some measure of support to or participation in the fight of the Negro people for equality and against all facets of discrimination, and ally it on the side of the social class forces of progress and peace. At the same time, within the coalition of the Negro people's movement, it is necessary for the workers to oppose and fight against the conservative, compromising and reactionary capitalist narrow-mindedness of the Negro capitalist influence within and upon that movement.

National Status of the Negro People

The Negro people are the most severely oppressed and all-sidedly exploited of all the peoples who make up the American nation of the United States.

The Negroes in the United States are not constituted as a separate nation. Rather, they have the characteristics of a racially distinctive people or nationality who are a historically determined component part of the American nation of the United States. The American nation (of the U.S., that is) is a historically derived national formation, an amalgam of more or less well differentiated nationalities.

Though deprived of their just and equal rights and freedom to fully participate in all aspects of the affairs of the nation, the Negro people nonetheless have contributed to and have an inseparable stake in (no less than its other national components) the American nation's common territory, economic life, language, culture and psychological make-up.

At the same time, compounded out of their singular historic experiences — from yesterday's slavery to today's aspirations and struggles for complete freedom — the Negro people retain special national features and nation-like characteristics which manifest themselves (among other ways) in a universal conception and consciousness of their identity as a distinctive "people"

with a national will to attain a status in the life of the American nation free of all manner of oppression, social ostracism, economic discrimination, political inequality, enforced racial segregation, or cultural retardation.

To conclude that the Negro people in the U.S. are not a nation is not to say that the Negro question in the U.S. is not a national question. It is indeed a national question. The question is, however, a national question of what type, with what distinguishing characteristics, calling for what strategic concept for its solution?

"An abstract presentation of the question of nationalism is of no use at all." These words from Lenin's famous letter of December 1922 on the "Question of Nationalities" represent the key to the Leninist approach to the national question.

In establishing the theoretical representation of the Negro question in the United States from the Marxist standpoint, it is necessary to appreciate the scope of the national question in Marxist thought. Marxism on the national question is concerned with the question of the liberation of the oppressed nation and the relationship of that cause to the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism in a given country and on a world scale. But this does not yet exhaust the scope of the national question. The national question exists in an infinite variety of forms and Marxist science provides guidelines for the theoretical representation and solution of each particular manifestation and formation of the national question. Within the scope of the national question, there is included not merely the question of the nation, but the question of national minorities, national and ethnic groups, national-ethnic minority questions and national-communal, i.e. religious, group questions, etc. Marxism provides a guide to the characterization and developmental outlook for each of these manifestations of the national question.

It is first necessary to determine precisely the particular variety or type of national question one is confronted with. It is obligatory to examine the distinctive features of that question in its development (not in static terms) and in its actual and potential relationship to dominant historical development of a given time. In reference to the national question one must above all be guided by

Lenin's admonition that no problem can be presented for practical solution if represented in isolation. The particular national question must be viewed and represented at all times in the context of its total relationships to the historical primary social forces. That is to say, it would be a feckless exercise to present the Negro question in the United States divorced from the historical and social, national and world influences and relationships which bear upon and in large measure decide the frame in which it can achieve resolution.

We were in error to limit our frame of reference in Marxist writings on the national question to that of "the nation" alone, in seeking scientific guidelines to an analysis and representation of the Negro question in the United States. We incorrectly selected the universally valid Marxist principle of "self-determination for oppressed nations" as the primary category into which we sought to compress the Negro question in the United States. By selecting a Marxist principle which has unimpeachable validity in reference to the rights and logical course for development of oppressed nations, we logically were led to focus upon the distinctive nation-like features and characteristics of the Negro people as *the thing* of almost exclusive importance in the Negro question in the United States. But of no less importance in the life as well as history of the Negro people in the United States are the integral features and experiences, common history and aspirations of this people to secure their unfettered identification with, and inclusion in, the full rights and privileges of the American nation.

It is not at all necessary to deny the fact that the Negro people in the area of their majority in the Deep South exhibit to one degree or another characteristics common to distinctive nations in order to establish the fact that such nation-like attributes are not determinative for either the solution or representation of the Negro question in the United States. Such characteristics can not of themselves mark out the course of development and pathway to Negro freedom.

The path of development of the Negro people toward individual and "national" equality does not take the route of struggle for national independence and political-geographical sovereignty

and statehood.

The Negro people in the United States historically, now, and most probably for the future, seek solution to its national question in struggle for securing equality of political, economic and social status as a *component part of that amalgam of nationalities* which historically evolved into the American nation. This course of development is in conformation with the first law of Marxism that "mankind sets for itself only those tasks it can achieve." It corresponds to the sociological and economic forces operating objectively upon the course of development of the Negro people. These latter objective forces are centrifugal. They operate against the progressive build-up of closed areas of settlement in the countryside or in the towns of the Southlands "Black Belt." They correspond to the overbearing tendencies of industrial society to invade, diffuse and amalgamate peoples, and dislocate sectional and regional population.

Furthermore, this course of development and outlook corresponds to the central political reality of our historic period, that the solution of all democratic tasks is worked out in conformation with, and on the basis of, the primacy of the working-class struggle to transform modern society onto a socialist base — the key task in the gross solution of the overall problem of human oppression and exploitation. It places the struggle for the solution of the Negro question in direct and strategic relationship to the movement and main social force — the working class — for progress in our age.

The relevance of the general principle of self-determination to the reality of the Negro people's status and outlook in the U.S. can be expressed as follows:

The right of a people — irrespective of their level or direction of development as a national entity — to act in concert, or in alliance with fraternal classes and peoples, under the direction of their own leadership, after the fashion they may choose, in pursuance of their own goal of freedom as they so conceive and construe it to be at any given movement, is an inalienable democratic right of that people which can neither be ceded nor withdrawn by any other power. In this sense, the right to self-determination is to the na-

tional community what the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of political choice is to the individual.

Some Questions

1. *If the Negro people are not a nation, then how does one characterize their status in the United States?* The Negro people in the United States suffer a special form of national oppression. It is national in the sense that all class strata of the Negro people are subject to a common yoke of oppression and exploitation and social ostracism, are victims of social, economic and political inequality. They are racially identified and set apart by racist laws and customs, social existence and by actual ethnic identifications.

2. *If the characteristics of a nation which can be discerned or ascribed to the Negro community of the Deep South (Black Belt) are not the determining factors or indicators of the course of development of the Negro people, then what is their significance for the Negro people's freedom movement?*

That there are sizeable areas of the country where the concentration of Negroes in the population is large or a majority is of great importance for the political struggle and economic and cultural development of the Negro people. These areas are bases where the Negro freedom movement can organize and assert the mass power of numbers in struggle, to secure political authority in proportion to their numerical strength in the population. Their favorable ratio in the population allows for mutual aid and self-help, developments in the realm of advancing their economic well-being. Such areas of large Negro population allow for the continued development of what is distinctive in American Negro culture.

In general the large areas of the Negroes' concentrated numbers become the centers where mass actions of the Negro people are generated, the voices of the Negro people's movement which draw into the freedom struggle Negroes everywhere. They represent the big wheels of the Negro people's struggle which move the whole.

3. *What are the objective factors which operate and have operated against the development of the Negro people in the South as a nation?*

The accepted Leninist definition of a nation which Stalin so precisely formulated is: "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." A key word in this definition is "stable." Capitalist development in the United States generates forces which assail the stability of communities. Two factors gave a certain durability for a time to the Black Belt area of Negro majority in the Deep South. One — the fact that the overwhelming bulk of the Negro people were attached to the land as sharecroppers, tenants and impoverished farmers. Two — the racist barriers erected against Negro integration in the economic, political and social life in the country.

As late as 1930, 70 per cent of the Negro people were counted in this "peasant" category. The factor of a large land-bound ratio in the Negro community's total population gave that community a certain stability. But the demands of industrialization and the development of mechanization and technology in agriculture combined to command and expel the population from the countryside into the cities. This process considerably shrunk the areas of Negro majority in the South and furthered the distribution of the Negro population at the expense of a "stable community on a common territory." More than half of the Negro people, however, make their homes in the South. The Negro people, therefore, are in the main an oppressed urban working people. Therefore, the decisive role in the solution of the Negro question falls to the working-class strata. The poor farm masses and their economic demands and struggles relative to the land question remain a most important component in the total cause of Negro freedom, but clearly do not occupy the strategic position as of old, when the bulk of the Negro people were farmers.

Not only the operation of the elemental forces of economic changes have expelled and driven the Negro people from their paternal grounds, but the improvements in the area of economic and cultural opportunity (wrested in long and fierce struggle on the part of the Negro people and their allies) opened attractive small doors of opportunity to Negroes, particularly in the non-Southern metropolises and the larger Southern

cities.

In characterizing the Negro people in the Black Belt as a nation, we failed to properly plumb the import of that subjective attribute of nations which is one of the determining features, namely, "a common psychological make-up." If we had, we would have more seriously inquired into the history of the Negro people's movement and freedom endeavor in our country and drawn the requisite conclusions.

The main currents of Negro thought and leadership in the struggle for advancement and freedom historically and universally at the present time have projected their programs for Negro freedom from the premise that Negroes individually and as a people are no less Americans than any other claimants. They have ever sought to identify the aspirations of Negroes for freedom and equality of citizenship status with the broadest national interests of the country. They have not by choice sought a separate path of development in opposition to the main forward trends in American national life.

The Negro people related their cause of Abolitionism to the interests of national survival and democratic fulfillment prior to the Civil War. In the Civil War years the Negro people made their alliance with Federal authority against counter-revolutionary secessionism. Today, they invoke their constitutional rights as citizens of the United States in demands upon, and in alliance with, Federal authority, against the tyranny of "states' rights" Southern governments. The red thread of strategic conception that runs through the whole history of the Negro freedom movement is that of amassing the maximum self-organization, unity and strength of the Negro people and allying its forces with the major progressive cause and developments in complementary struggle for full equal rights for the Negro people and progress for the nation.

Only in describing the dimensions of their oppression have the Negro people represented themselves as a people apart from the American nation. Their whole struggle has been to secure their historically due and just recognition as Americans with all the accompanying prerequisites of such national identification.

It is true, of course, that objective being is not

conditioned upon subjective recognition of one's status. A particular working class is the gravedigger of its capitalist class historically whether the workers are aware of this at a given time or not. So if objective factors and the line of historical development were operating to enhance and foster the maturation of the national attributes of the Negro people and compound their features in nationhood, the Negro people would have a separate national destiny whether or not they manifested this consciousness.

The objective factors operating in relation to the Negro people in the United States are working not in the direction of national insularity or separate development of its national attributes but in the direction of the integration of the Negro people of all classes into the mainstream of American contemporary and historical development.

4. *By not placing the Negro question as a question of an oppressed nation fighting for national-state sovereignty, are we thereby diminishing the revolutionary import of the Negro people's struggle in the United States?*

No. A special feature of the American road to socialism is revealed in the fact that the requisite preparation of the forces for effecting fundamental social change in the system necessitates the completion of the bourgeois-democratic norms of political, economic and social development for the South in general and the Negro people in particular. Furthermore, a condition for accomplishing the prerequisite unity of the American working class with its class allies for advanced social struggle is to level the main rails of the color bar. The struggle of the Negro people for the democratic goals of political, economic and social equality feeds into the general stream of the historic working-class cause of our time a powerful current which raises the torrential power of the whole cause of social advance.

The elementary democratic demands of the Negro people can be met only at the expense of the monopolists and Dixiecrats, by strengthening the popular forces and depriving the monopoly ruling circle of the means of political oppression and economic superprofits. The fact that the Negro people's struggle for freedom and equality unfolds *within* the United States in direct and in-

timate association with working-class and popular struggles, the fact that it is directed against the common class oppressor (the white monopolists and ruling circles) and not through a compradore class of "native" agents, the fact that the scene of the Negro people's struggle unfolds within the bosom of American imperialism — on the main stage and not a faraway land or insular holding of American imperialism — means that the full force of the least activity of this movement has its direct impact and consequences in challenge to the enemy and support to the broad forces of social progress.

Furthermore, the purging of white chauvinist and anti-Negro prejudices from the thought and attitudes of the white masses is a vital aspect of the subjective preparation of the working class for undertaking the leadership responsibility in the struggle for a higher form of social order — for socialism. It is the way the American working class is being educated in internationalism in the first instance. Lenin has written:

Internationalism on the part of oppressing, or "great" nations as they are called (though they are great only in violence . . .) must consist not only in observing formal equality of nations, but in an inequality that would make up, as far as the oppressing nation — the great nation — is concerned, for the inequality which obtains in actual life. Whoever does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question. ("Question of Nationalities.")

The true proletarian attitude to the national question, Lenin stressed over and over again, consists of deeds performed to wipe out the inequalities and injustices suffered by the victims of national or racial oppression; in the struggle for full equality for the Negro people. As Lenin noted further:

nothing so much holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity as national injustice; "offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of that equality, if only through negligence or as a joke, by their

proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo it in the way of flexibility and leniency towards the national minorities than underdo it.

A revitalized, strengthened and more democratic procedure of Constitutional government is the requisite form for the Negro people to secure their full freedom aims. Therefore, the Negro people's movement has a continuing partisan stake and vital interest in all of the general problems of the state structure, laws, etc., for this is the frame within which it makes its struggle for freedom. It is vitally affected by the nature of these general questions of State.

5. *When we conclude that self-determination for the Negro nation in the Black Belt is not a sound or applicable characterization of the course of development in the cause of Negro freedom and the solution of the Negro question in the United States, are we not saying that the Negro people have voiced their right of self-determination and chosen integration?*

No. The Negro people have not had and do not now have the democratic means of deciding for or against a course of development as a nation. Developments beyond the will of the Negro people to determine — objective economic and historical factors — have primarily conditioned the course and outlook of the development of and solution of the Negro national question in the United States. It is the reflection of these objective and material considerations and circumstances which find their expression in the articulated programs, outlook and conclusions as to the course that the movement for solution of the Negro question will take.

The essential content and basic objective of the Negro people's struggle is to secure full and equal means of decision on all questions affecting them and the country's welfare, to secure the right to vote and be elected to office and to secure unfettered equality in all respects. These are the tools for decision for which the Negro people struggle now in order to be enabled to decide matters in their self-interest and in the national interest as is consistent with democratic requirements.

The Second Invasion of Lebanon

TOM FOLEY

Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East which has twice been subjected to U.S. invasion, first in 1958 and again from 1982 until today. In both cases it was not Lebanon alone that was a matter of concern for the imperialists; both in 1958 and today, the situation in the oil-rich Persian Gulf was considered by them to be of such critical concern that a direct, visible U.S. military presence in the Middle East within striking distance of the Persian Gulf was thought a vital necessity.

Practically all the strands of the Middle East problem cross in Lebanon, particularly around the capital, Beirut. Until a short time ago, a glance at any airline route map of the Middle East would have shown nearly all routes intersecting in Beirut (except those involving Israel). Lebanon was also the distribution center for the whole Middle East as well as the region's chief banking center.

Arab oil funds flowed into Lebanon, as did two oil pipelines, one from Iraq and the other from Saudi Arabia. Banking and commerce were the country's major economic activities, although tourism was becoming increasingly important for Lebanon is a kind of super-Southern California in terms of climate and terrain.

In other respects it was more like Nevada. Arab oil profits built one of the biggest gambling casino centers in the world just north of Beirut where, as in Las Vegas, everything was for sale if you had enough money. In the Arab world, Beirut was thought of the same way many people in the U.S. think of Las Vegas.

Of course the reality is different for both cities. But it is true that Lebanon is perhaps the richest country in the Arab world in one other respect: agriculture.

Along the eastern Mediterranean coast, rainfall

steadily increases as one goes from south to north. Around Israeli-occupied Gaza, near the Egyptian border, the average annual rainfall is only one inch. At the Israeli-Lebanese border, it is around 30 inches. It takes at least 10 inches of rainfall a year to permit trees to grow and anything under that figure qualifies as desert.

This abundant Lebanese rainfall plus the country's fertile soil meant that agriculture was the basis of much of the domestic economy. Lebanon produced typical California-type crops: citrus, sugar beets, grapes, potatoes, cotton, tobacco, etc. In the valley between the two mountain ranges that run parallel to the coast, the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon had its equivalent of California's Central Valley.

The natural richness of the country meant it could support about 450 people per square mile compared to Israel's 350, even though Lebanon is slightly smaller than Connecticut (the last estimate of its population was about three million).

Rainfall decreases as you go from west to east, since the rains are partly blocked by the coastal Lebanon range and the Anti-Lebanon range which forms the eastern Lebanon-Syria border. Thus, in Damascus, the Syrian capital, rainfall is only 5 inches a year and irrigated agriculture is necessary. It is like the difference between California and Arizona.

Except for the Bekaa Valley, much of Lebanon is mountainous, with small regions cut off from each other except by difficult roads. As with other mountainous regions — the Caucasus, the Southern Appalachians, etc. — this had produced a rather fragmented, regionalized society. In the case of Lebanon, there is a basic, underlying unity: 94 per cent of the population has Arabic as its mother tongue (six per cent of Lebanon's population speaks Armenian, but the vast majority of these also speak Arabic).

Until the 19th century, the primary identification of the vast majority of Lebanese probably

Tom Foley, a staff writer for the *Daily World*, is a specialist on Middle Eastern affairs.

was with their own religious community. This religious communalism, which can be and very often is more social than religious, remains a dominant factor in Lebanese life, although much less so than formerly.

The Shi'ite Muslims today are estimated to make up at least 30 per cent of the total Lebanese population. By most accounts, they are the single biggest religious-communal group in the country and make up the bulk of the population in southern Lebanon. Repeated aggression by the Israelis forced tens of thousands of them to flee north as homeless refugees to other areas of the country.

The Shi'ites are undoubtedly the poorest group in Lebanon. In Beirut the Shi'ites formed huge slums as they took over abandoned buildings or constructed homes of what they could find.

The refugees among the Shi'ites had to abandon their land and most of whatever property they had possessed. Few of them were skilled workers and in the Beirut area they were employed mainly in unskilled manual labor jobs. In religion, the Shi'ites belong to the same group which makes up over 90 per cent of the population of Iran, where it is headed by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The Iranian revolution against the Shah and U.S. imperialism was welcomed by the vast majority of Lebanese Shi'ites. Khomeini is a very popular symbol among them. There are also many Lebanese Shi'ites who are in the progressive movements and parties in the country, including the Lebanese Communist Party. The Shi'ites' armed defense group (militia), the Amal, is headed by Nabih Berri. Although Amal is not formally part of the Lebanese National Salvation Front, they have a close working alliance.

The size of the Shi'ite community; the fact that it is made up largely of poor, oppressed working people who tend to be anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist, and who have strong sympathies with the Iranian revolution; the Shi'ites' location in and around Beirut and in the Israeli-occupied south—all these facts have made them a special target for U.S. imperialism and Zionism.

The Sunni Muslims in Lebanon are mainly north of Beirut. The city of Tripoli in north Lebanon is in a Sunni region. The name Sunni comes

from the Arabic "sunna," meaning tradition (of the Prophet Muhammad). The majority of Muslims in the world are Sunnis. (The name Shi'ite comes from "shi'a," meaning party, the party made up of partisans of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law). The best known Lebanese Sunni leader is former premier Rashid Karami from Tripoli, one of the top leaders of the National Salvation Front.

The Maronite Christians form the single largest Christian community in Lebanon. One estimate puts Christians as a whole as making up 25 per cent of the total population, with Maronites accounting for 20 per cent. They are located in central Lebanon and particularly around Beirut.

For most of its existence as a republic, Lebanon was dominated by a Maronite ruling group. The powerful capitalist banking and commercial group based in Beirut was almost entirely Maronite and had very close ties with French and later with U.S. imperialism. This group was culturally oriented to France and the U.S. and tended to view Arab nationalism, the Arab national liberation movement and the Palestinians in particular as threats to their privileges.

Of course, there is a Maronite component of the Lebanese working class and many Maronites who identify with Lebanon's progressive forces. One of the top leaders of the National Salvation Front is former president Suleiman Franjeh, a Maronite Christian leader.

The people who are called "Christians" in Western news media accounts of Lebanon actually belong to a secular and fascist movement which developed out of the most reactionary segment of the Maronite ruling class: the Phalange (al-Kataeb). The Phalange was founded in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel and was consciously molded on the Spanish Falange of Francisco Franco.

Pierre Gemayel saw Franco as fighting for Western, Christian civilization against the hordes of organized labor, socialism and nationalism. This was what the Lebanese Phalange had to do as well.

In Phalangist ideology, Lebanon is not an Arab, Middle Eastern country, and certainly not a Muslim one. Instead it is a Western, Christian country: "Western" because it identifies with the values of the "West," that is, capitalism; "Chris-

tian" because by Gemayel's definition, a Lebanese must be a Christian or he is not a Lebanese at all. That means that the Phalangists do not accept the Muslims and Druse as in any sense Lebanese: if they are permitted to exist at all, it is only because the real Lebanese need them for their labor-power. In other words, this is an ideology which attempts to justify not Maronite but rather Maronite ruling class dominance, by armed force and terror if necessary. Essentially, it is no different than European varieties of fascism.

The Druse are a unique religious group, neither Muslim nor Christian, who live in mountainous areas of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. Their total number is around 400,000, the majority in Lebanon.

They are an outgrowth of the Shi'ite Islam of the medieval Middle East, when a Shi'ite dynasty held power in Egypt — the Fatimids. The sixth Fatimid caliph, Hakim (11th century) proclaimed that he was the divinity. The Druse accept this and believe that he is today still living, but in hiding, and will return to bring justice on earth at the appointed time (very much like the Judeo-Christian messiah). There are obviously very close similarities in ideology between the Druse and Shi'ite Muslims, but the Druse do not consider themselves, nor are they considered by others, to be Muslims. As a community, they form a closed group which does not permit either conversion or intermarriage. Their main religious beliefs are closely-guarded secrets, not known even to academic specialists.

Politically, the Druse have shown an amazing ability to get along with practically any regime which leaves them to their own devices: In Israel, for instance, they are the only Arabs permitted to serve in the Israeli armed forces and they indeed form an important part of the Israeli Border Police.

At the same time, the Druse are the bulk of the population in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights of Syria. There, they have stoutly insisted that they are Syrian citizens and will never carry Israeli identification cards. There have been several Druse general strikes in the Golan Heights over this issue, quite an embarrassing occurrence for

the Israeli regime. The Druse have been strongly supported in their resistance to Israeli oppression by the Communist Party of Israel.

In Lebanon, the Druse community has played an important, and one could say pivotal, role, out of all proportion to its numbers. Walid Jumblatt, the head of the Lebanese Druse community, is a top leader of the National Salvation Front and the chief NSF spokesman. Like his father, the late Kemal Jumblatt, he is head of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon (PSP).

The PSP has a formal, written alliance with the Lebanese Communist Party. It was a great honor for me to meet with Kemal Jumblatt when I attended the Third Congress of the Lebanese Communist Party in Beirut in 1972. It is with a heavy heart that I report that of the people who took part in that 1972 meeting, only one is alive today.

The basic orientation of the Druse community in Lebanon for more than a century has been anti-imperialist. The French imperialists used the pretext of Druse attacks on the Maronite Christians in the 1860s to expand their influence in that part of what was then the Ottoman Turkish Empire. After World War I, in 1920, France received Syria (including Lebanon) as a mandate of the League of Nations.

This was, of course, simply an international cover for what was outright French colonialism, very similar to the colonialist oppression which engulfed Algeria and Vietnam. For many years, Syria, as a geographical expression, had meant the area between Egypt and Anatolia. No distinction was drawn between Syria and Lebanon. The Syrian region was the original center of the Arab nationalist movement, which was at first primarily concerned with liberating the Arabs from Ottoman Turkish oppression.

Nonetheless, the Arabs did not greet the French imperialists as liberators. The French had to fight their way into Damascus in 1920 with armed force. The chief stumbling block in their way were the Druse, who bitterly contested French colonial rule every step of the way. In 1925-27, a Druse uprising with the help of Syrian Arab nationalists succeeded in seizing military control of Damascus, defying the French colonialists until a protracted war exhausted Druse re-

sources.

It should be emphasized that in World War II, the Druse — unlike some other Arab nationalist groups — came out from the very beginning on the Allied side. Although Syria, including Lebanon, was under Vichy French rule, the Druse took the side of the Allies, aiding them with armed force against the Nazis and the Vichy French. This was a major reason why Gen. De Gaulle, the Free French leader, decided to agree to independence for Syria and Lebanon.

The Palestinians are another major population group in Lebanon. They were said to number some 300,000 and were concentrated in camps in south Lebanon, the Beirut area and around Tripoli in the north. Basically, the Palestinians in Lebanon were refugees from Galilee during the 1948-49 Palestine war in what is now northern Israel.

They were never granted Lebanese citizenship, for all kinds of reasons. One reason was the feeling, especially among members of the Right wing of the Maronite ruling class, that since the Palestinians were mainly Muslims (although there is a significant minority of Christian Palestinians) they would tip the political balance toward the Muslims in Lebanon. This feeling was especially strong among those elements associated with the Phalange.

The Lebanese progressive forces developed friendly and close relations with the Palestinians. Among other things, the Lebanese Communist Party took the lead in demanding that the exploited Palestinian workers in Lebanon must be covered by the Lebanese labor laws in terms of wages, working conditions, health and safety regulations, pensions, etc. This was in the basic interests of both the Lebanese and Palestinian workers. (Interestingly, the LCP took the same stand in regard to the 250,000 or so migrant farm workers from Syria who came into Lebanon every year at harvest time.)

The political system in Lebanon evolved under French colonial rule and was based on the assumption that the Maronite Christians would always remain numerically the dominant group in

the country. In the first, and only, national census ever taken in Lebanon, in 1932, the Maronites were shown to be the single largest religious-communal group. The Lebanese political system was based on this 1932 census, which grew more and more out of touch with reality with every passing year.

The Free French under De Gaulle decided to proclaim Lebanon an independent republic in 1943 because of the Lebanese contribution to the anti-fascist Allied cause. All political and religious-communal groups got together in 1943 and worked out what came to be known as the National Compact. Essentially, this accepted the 1932 census and apportioned power according to a formula in which the Maronites predominated, but with power shared with all other religious groups.

Thus it was agreed that the president of Lebanon always had to be a Maronite, the premier had to be a Sunni Muslim, the speaker of the 99-member parliament had to be a Shi'ite Muslim and seats in the parliament had to be allotted on the Maronite predominance theory.

When Lebanon became independent on January 1, 1945, this was the system that went into effect. The dominance of the Maronite banking and commercial group in the ruling class ensured that Lebanon played a very half-hearted role in the 1948-49 Palestine war and that almost no military operations were conducted against the Zionists from Lebanese soil. As we know today from the 1983 admissions of Haganah and Labor Party leaders, the Zionist movement had close ties with the Maronite ruling class — particularly the Phalangist component of it — even before Israeli independence.

In the early 1950s, two major developments disturbed the U.S. imperialists in the Middle East. One was the emergence of Premier Mohammed Mosaddeq in Iran and the nationalization of Iranian oil. However, the CIA overthrew Mosaddeq in 1953 and installed the Shah back on the throne. The second was the overthrow of Egyptian King Farouk in 1952 by the group of Arab nationalist Free Officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. And Nasser was not so easy for the CIA to handle.

As a curious footnote, it should be pointed out that Nasser's wife was Iranian and that there was always some connection between the Iranian nationalist and anti-imperialist movement and the Egyptian leadership as long as Nasser was in power.

The imperialists were nervous in any case when in 1958 Syria and Egypt joined to form the United Arab Republic (UAR). But when Washington policy-makers, still smarting over the Suez debacle in 1956-57, really lost their heads was with the July 1958 revolution in Iraq. The Iraqi revolution overthrew a pro-British monarch in an oil-rich country which directly bordered on Saudi Arabia. One of the reasons for the overthrow was the formation of the Baghdad Pact (Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan), an anti-Soviet military alliance under British and U.S. control. The Iraqi revolutionaries, who were Arab nationalists like Nasser, made no secret of the fact that they hated imperialism and Zionism and wanted nothing to do with anti-Sovietism, since the USSR had supported Egypt against imperialist and Zionist aggression.

At that point, using all kinds of lying pretexts, the U.S. invaded Lebanon, landing tens of thousands of troops around Beirut. Basically what Washington wanted was a land base in the eastern Mediterranean, in the Arab world but close enough to the NATO lands of Europe so that logistics would not be a problem. If the Iraqi revolution had spread into Iran or Saudi Arabia, Lebanon would have become the base for a U.S. attempt to crush it.

In fact, what was happening in Lebanon in 1958 was a purely internal political eruption due to the fact that President Camille Chamoun, in defiance of the constitution, was insisting on running for a second term. Not even most Maronites wanted that.

Undoubtedly, those in power in the UAR in Cairo and Damascus were cheering from the sidelines as practically all of Lebanon went into revolt against Chamoun — notorious among other things for his close ties with the CIA — but the UAR had nothing to do with the situation, as teams of United Nations observers on the Syria-Lebanon border attested in piles of detailed re-

ports. None of these facts bothered the U.S. Administration, which insisted that Nasser had to be at the bottom of it all. It took months, and the expenditure of \$200 million for the U.S. invasion force, to convince them otherwise. But of course by that time the danger of the Iraqi revolution to Saudi Arabia and Iran had greatly receded and so they were not reluctant to pull out.

Chamoun was forced out and Gen. Fouad Chehab, commander of the small Lebanese Army, took his place as president, while Rashid Karami, a Sunni Muslim and leader of the anti-Chamoun rebellion in north Lebanon, became premier. All of this was quite in line with the 1943 National Compact. But in fact, political life in Lebanon was never quite the same after 1958.

There may have been no direct connection with the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s, and yet it is certain that in this epoch, the idea of "one man, one vote," took hold in vast segments of the country's political life. As in the U.S., the movement for democracy in Lebanon threatened the entrenched, privileged ruling group, in this case the Maronites. It was becoming increasingly clear to all that the results of the 1932 census were no longer valid, since the Muslim birth rate was double that of the Christians, and that in fact there was no longer a Christian majority. Hence, Lebanon's traditional political system would have to be changed if the country was to remain a democracy.

An indication of what was happening and of how powerful the democratic current in politics was becoming was the fact that in 1970 the powers that be were forced to agree to the legalization of the Lebanese Communist Party. By 1972, the LCP had over 10,000 members — in a country of three million people! — and exerted a decisive influence in Lebanon's organized labor movement.

The fact that Lebanon's traditional political structure was based on religious-communal affiliation effectively barred the LCP from gaining seats in parliament or in the government. But the LCP justly argued that it was the only true national party in the whole country, since in its ranks there were members from every single religious community in Lebanon — Christian, Muslim and Druse. This fact was acknowledged by an

amazingly broad range of public opinion, as I personally discovered in 1972, and in fact the only group in the country that was willing to publicly attack the LCP was the fascist Phalange.

In the early 1970s, then, it was obvious that the Maronite ruling class could only hold on to power by open violence, by junking the traditional bourgeois democratic system and by turning to the fascist Phalange. The chief stumbling block in the way of this was the fact that not even the Maronite community as a whole was willing to tolerate this, most Maronites being non-fascists. The small Phalangist minority, like Franco in Spain in 1936, had to turn to outside forces for aid in imposing a Phalangist solution by military force. These outside forces were the Zionist regime in Israel and U.S. imperialism.

The October 1973 war in the Middle East brought these questions to a head. Arguments about who won that war are futile. What we do know is that Israel was stopped in its military tracks, pushed back many times and took terrific losses, the heaviest casualties it had ever suffered up to that time. The Zionists may have felt the need to strike out and take the pressure off somehow in the aftermath of the war, and yet the existence of UN-controlled disengagement zones between Israel, Egypt and Syria meant they had only two places to think of hitting: Jordan, run by a pro-U.S. monarch, King Hussein, and Lebanon.

The Palestinians were made the scapegoat: the Lebanese civil war erupted in 1975 when the Phalangist militia, headed by Bashir Gemayel, machine-gunned a bus carrying Palestinian school-children. Twenty-six children were killed. There followed other terrorist attacks on the Palestinians by the Phalangists, attacks certain to provoke a general outbreak of fighting between the two groups throughout the length and breadth of Lebanon.

The fighting intensified as the Lebanese Left, particularly the Lebanese Communists and the Druse-led Progressive Socialist Party, came to the aid of the embattled Palestinians against the Phalange. As in the Spanish Civil War, the fascists committed revolting atrocities against unarmed

civilians. And those taken prisoner with arms in hand often suffered a fate worse than those who were immediately killed. It is estimated that in 1975-76 at least 60,000 Lebanese died in the civil war — 60,000 out of three million.

Perhaps the most horrifying massacre was at the Palestinian refugee camp of Tell al-Zaatar, where thousands of men, women and children died under a rain of shells from Bashir Gemayel's 105 mm howitzers — both howitzers and shells having been bought from French Army depots. Gemayel's thugs carried U.S.-made M-16 rifles with markings in Hebrew characters on them.

The carnage became so appalling that then-President Suleiman Franjeh, a Maronite Christian conservative but not a fascist, appealed to Syria for help. A formal invitation was sent to Syria by the legal Lebanon government to intervene in Lebanon to restore order. The Syrians later got a mandate from the Arab League for this action, but when they intervened militarily, they were strongly opposed, primarily by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and much bloodshed resulted. This fact may help to explain many developments that took place much later, in 1983.

It is important in this context to be aware of the fact that the Syrian military presence is entirely legal under international law and the UN Charter; that the Syrians are there by invitation of the legitimate government of Lebanon (as, for instance, the Cubans are in Angola, Soviet forces are in Afghanistan and the Vietnamese are in Kampuchea), and that the Syrians are fulfilling a mandate from the Arab League. They did succeed in stopping the carnage of the civil war in 1976, though at no small cost to themselves.

It is certainly true that in 1976 the Syrians intervened at the invitation of a largely conservative Lebanese government. But whether in so doing they snatched victory from the grasp of the PLO and the Lebanese Left is arguable. But such arguments today are futile since the situation has fundamentally changed.

In 1977 came the election of Menachem Begin as premier of Israel and the trip of President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt to Jerusalem. Then in 1978

came the U.S.-sponsored Camp David accords, the emergence of Syria as the bulwark of the Arab resistance to these accords, the increasingly friendly relations between Syria, the PLO and the Lebanese Left, and the 1978 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon.

It was clear at the time that the UN move to get the Israelis to withdraw and to replace them with a UN peacekeeping force could only have succeeded with the tacit support of the U.S. Why, then, did the U.S. position radically change within a year?

The answer lies, as it did in 1958, in the changed situation in the Persian Gulf, center of interest for the U.S. oil monopolies. With the victory of the Iranian revolution in early 1979, the entire plan of U.S. imperialism to use the Shah of Iran as a kind of "security guard" for oil monopoly interests in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole was completely shattered. Henry Kissinger was never so right as when he said that the Iranian revolution had completely destabilized the whole Middle East — against U.S. imperialism.

The answer of the U.S. was to try to fend off any possible Iranian threat to the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, Saudi Arabia in particular. Steps taken in this regard were the declaration, by then-President Jimmy Carter, that the Persian Gulf was a region vital to the national interests of the U.S. (that is, the oil monopolies), the creation of a new Rapid Deployment Force, the strengthening of U.S. military ties with Egypt, Israel, Oman and Somalia, the pushing of a military-financial agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and finally, in September 1980, the incitement of the Iraqi regime, backed by Saudi Arabia, to launch a war of aggression against Iran. (The characterization of this war as one of aggression by the Iraqi regime was agreed to by both the Tudeh (Masses) Party of Iran and the Iraqi Communist Party.)

None of this, however, succeeded in halting the Iranian revolution, though it may have slowed them down a bit. For that reason, the U.S. imperialists once again had to think about grabbing the most suitable place in the Middle East for a military base of operations for interven-

tion in the Persian Gulf. Once again, as in 1958, Lebanon seemed to be the most suitable place.

And here, the interests of the U.S. imperialists, the Israeli Zionists and the Lebanese fascist Phalangists interlocked. All were interested in the physical annihilation of the PLO as a radical force in the Arab world. All were interested in grabbing Lebanon, each one for its own distinct reasons. The Phalangists needed foreign intervention if they were ever to dream of imposing their rule over Lebanon. The Israelis had always intended to annex Lebanon south of the Litani River, an area agriculturally richer than any in Israel and one which could support hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers. The U.S. needed a toehold on any land in the Arab world which could be defended by the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean and yet be within striking distance of the Persian Gulf, an area where a certain amount of local support could be taken for granted.

Lebanon was the only area that fitted this description.

It was no accident that Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon visited Washington barely a week before launching the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Sharon was there only a short time after Secretary of State Alexander Haig stated in an important speech in Chicago that the situations in regard to the Palestinians, Lebanon and Iran, were all interrelated, and that the U.S. would take decisive action to resolve all these questions.

Sharon returned home from Washington to dupe the Israeli Knesset (parliament) into agreeing to a short-term, limited Israeli assault on Lebanon that was, according to Sharon, to go no deeper than 25 kilometers (fifteen miles) into Lebanese territory. In reality, Begin and Sharon had already worked out plans to seize and hold Beirut. But not for the Israelis.

What has emerged from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, however, is quite different from what the U.S. imperialists expected. To begin with, the Israelis suffered heavy losses: Officially, at least 507 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting up to September 1983, in the longest war in Israeli

history.

With the organization of an underground national resistance in Israeli-occupied Lebanon, led by the Lebanese Communist Party and other patriotic groups, Israeli casualties surged: Since September 1983, an estimated 210 Israeli soldiers have been killed by the resistance fighters and close to 800 wounded. The strength of the resistance caused the Israelis to pull out of the largely Druse-settled Shuf Mountains region and to concentrate their forces in south Lebanon.

But in fact, the Israeli have been unsuccessful in dealing with the resistance, whose attacks are mounting daily. The continuing bloodshed has had political repercussions at home, where 400,000 Israelis have demonstrated for peace in Lebanon, about 10 per cent of the total population of Israel. Hundreds of Israeli Army reserve officers and enlisted men have joined the various peace organizations as a direct result of their active duty experiences in Lebanon.

There has been little result too from the pouring of vast U.S. funds into training and equipping the Lebanese Army, which is little more than an extension of the Lebanese fascist Phalangist militia. The government of President Amin Gemayel holds sway over parts of Beirut, but not over the whole city and certainly not over Lebanon as a whole. The presence of 1,600 Marines and 30 warships of the U.S. 6th Fleet has not won the day for Gemayel.

On the contrary, the deaths of 258 Marines (by January 10, 1984), led to an outpouring of U.S. public opposition to any further U.S. military involvement in Lebanon. There are escalating demands that the U.S. should pull all of its military forces out of Lebanon. These demands have already lead to the partial troop withdrawals announced by President Reagan, and the end of the participation of Britain and Italy in the so-called multinational force. However, this step falls far short of ending the aggression, since it leaves some U.S. troops on the ground in Lebanon, and

actually escalates the use of naval and air power against Lebanese patriotic forces.

A settlement of the Lebanese civil war will require a national reconciliation taking into account the interests of all parties concerned — not including, of course, those of the U.S. imperialists. In particular, under such an agreement the government would not be dominated by the Phalange and all political and religious-communal groups in Lebanon would have to be represented in a new government.

Withdrawal of the U.S.-NATO forces from Lebanon could go a long way toward establishing the preconditions for the achievement of such a coalition government. That would mark a step toward rationality in the Middle East and promote the aims of peace and democracy in the region. It would provide an opening for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, starting with the U.S.-NATO and Israeli forces.

It should be stressed here that the Palestinians are in no sense "foreigners" in Lebanon and have every right to remain there until the Palestinian question is resolved by carrying out existing UN resolutions.

The mission of the Reverend Jesse Jackson to Syria and the release to him of Lt. Robert Goodman has shown that there is a willingness on the part of Syria to resolve the question on a just, humanitarian and peaceful basis. There is no need for an armed confrontation; talks, such as the talks in Geneva, in which Syria played such a crucial role, can resolve the differences that exist.

The Lebanese situation is not insoluble. It can be solved by the Lebanese — and by no others — on a democratic basis, with no outside interference. The U.S. public, progressives especially, can play a tremendous role here, not by getting the U.S. government to do something but rather by getting it and the ruling class behind it to *stop* doing what it is doing in Lebanon. The Lebanese people can not be sacrificed on the altar of U.S. oil monopoly superprofits in the Persian Gulf.

From 'Russia,' Without Hate

MICHAEL PARENTI

Americans who travel to the Soviet Union carry a lot of baggage with them — not all of it in their suitcases. Before I embarked on a recent two-week tour of Moscow, Leningrad and Baku with a group of twenty Americans, mostly political scientists, I had heard we would encounter a regimented, demoralized people and a Soviet economy that was visibly falling apart and unable to feed its populace. I had been informed that we would be discouraged by our Soviet guides from moving about freely and making contacts with ordinary citizens, and that these citizens would be afraid to talk to us. After a lifetime of exposure to the U.S. media, one might expect to see long lines of people standing in front of sparsely-stocked stores, a society populated by potential defectors and seething minorities, where nothing and nobody worked very well — except, of course, the military and the KGB.

The impressions I gathered from this trip, while hardly definitive in depth and scope, do not square with what I had so often heard and read. We were free to roam where we wanted and were even encouraged to do so. The people we encountered on the streets and in the parks spoke to us in a friendly and forthright manner, often with good-natured humor and without casting fearful glances over their shoulders. Far from being dour and deprived, they seemed self-confident and rather more prosperous than I had expected.

The Soviet Union, like the wrong wash in the detergent ads, is said to suffer from "drabness." Certainly I saw nothing in Moscow, Baku or even Leningrad that compares with the neon decor of Times Square. But the streets are remarkably free of litter and well-kept, and the cities — especially Moscow — are generously endowed with wooded areas and parks. It being late summer, the

women and children were dressed in gaily-flowered apparel, although clothing styles for both sexes seemed more reminiscent of Des Moines than New York. After viewing the array of public buildings, monuments, red banners, churches, strolling crowds, parks and numerous flower stands, I found that "drabness" was not a word that came to my mind, nor did I hear it used by anyone else in our group.

Each of the four hotels we stayed at had at least one or two discos or night clubs featuring recent American, Italian, French and Soviet music. The dance floors were crowded with eager participants, most of whom were Soviets. A member of our group commented: "What's with the disco? I read that the government discourages dancing and that people here dance only in the privacy of their homes." He seemed to be directing his skepticism more at what he was seeing than at what he had previously read.

The Soviet people appear to be well-fed, healthy and hearty. The myth that the Soviet Union can not feed its people owes much to the Soviet grain imports, the most widely propagandized trade deal in history. What is rarely mentioned in the U.S. press, I discovered, is that the imported American grain is used entirely for fodder. According to a 1982 CIA report on the Soviet economy, the USSR produces more than enough grain to feed its people. But Soviet eating habits are changing: per capita meat consumption has doubled in the last two decades. Since it takes between 7 and 14 pounds of grain to produce 1 pound of meat, additional grain is imported. Interestingly enough, Western Europe buys more American grain than does the USSR, but no one accuses France, West Germany and the Benelux countries of being unable to feed their people.

The increased consumption of meat and dairy products in the USSR is seen in both the East and West as an "improved" diet, even though the latest evidence suggests that a high meat and dairy

Michael Parenti, author of *Democracy for the Few*, is a frequent contributor to progressive publications.

intake is not the best thing for one's cardiovascular system. We were served meat two and three times a day, with alternate fish dishes available upon advance request. Our breakfast table was a veritable Cholesterol City, loaded with eggs, buttermilk, butter, cream, sour cream, yogurt, cheese — and tasty dark bread.

I had read in the *Washington Post* (December 12, 1982) that in the Soviet Union and other socialist nations, "the symptoms of decay are visible . . . from widespread political apathy to ill-lit streets and empty shops to massive corruption." The streets of the cities we visited were generally well-lit and, more importantly, they seemed a lot safer than our own. Our two female Soviet guides were not afraid to stroll into a wooded area in Moscow at 11:30 p.m. Late one evening in Baku, one of several women we had observed sitting alone on park benches told us that unaccompanied women and elderly persons felt quite safe sitting in the parks and walking in the streets after dark. There seemed to be no need for the kind of "Take Back the Night" marches women have been conducting in our own country.

Far from being "empty," as the *Post* asserts, the vast GUM department store in Moscow and the many shops along the Nevsky Prospekt in Leningrad are stocked with an impressive variety of goods, everything from high quality food delicacies and precious stones to stereos and camping equipment. We saw no lines in front of shops except for one at a Moscow shoe store that was having a sale. Inside most stores, however, the traffic is often heavy.

What is missing from Soviet consumerism is the rationing of the free market. Bloomingdale's is less crowded than GUM because millions of persons in the New York metropolitan area who might otherwise choose to shop there can not afford to — either because they are unemployed or because they expend the bulk of their income on food, housing, fuel, medical care, tuition and transportation. In the USSR there has been no unemployment problem since the mid-1930s; everyone is guaranteed a job; rents can never be more than 3 or 4 per cent of one's wages; medical

care is free; education is free to the highest level of one's ability; utility services are inexpensive; bread prices have remained the same since 1928; most other food staples are subsidized; and it costs only 7 cents to ride the subway. Small wonder Soviet citizens have a good deal of what economists call "discretionary income" — which helps explain the crowded shops.

This is not to say that everything and everyone in the Soviet Union is just fine and dandy. If we are to judge from what the Soviet leaders themselves say, there exist problems of productivity, industrialization, urbanization, bureaucracy, vested group interests and corruption. There are distribution bottlenecks, planning problems and consumer scarcities. Furthermore, even under the best of conditions, a society of such size and complexity is bound to have some people who are discontent with their lot, who don't have enough of what they want, who suffer some personal unhappiness or career disappointment, or who are politically disenchanting.

Alcoholism, a condition inherited from czarist days and one that seems common to countries in the northern clime, remains a real problem. Although I must say that during my entire trip I saw only one drunk (in a night club) and encountered none of the alcoholic beggars who are an increasingly common sight on the streets of my home town (Washington, D.C.). Soviet alcoholism is not bred from mass destitution and dereliction and so seems to have a lower visibility.

We Americans have been repeatedly told there is no freedom of religion in the USSR, and I recall how the U.S. press pilloried the Reverend Billy Graham for suggesting the contrary. So it was with keen interest that I joined members of our group to observe a Russian Orthodox Church service in one of the USSR's 20,000 functioning churches. The church was small and heavily laden with flowers and religious adornments. About 70 worshippers, mostly middle-aged and elderly women, stood crowded into the area in front of the altar, chanting energetically in response to incantations from a bearded priest. Some worshippers occasionally fell onto their hands and knees, crossing them-

selves and then touching their foreheads to the floor. Near the entrance of the church another priest stood by a basin of holy water, hearing confessions. If the Soviet government represses religious worshippers, it was doing a feeble job on this particular crowd. The overall impression was of an uninhibited outpouring of devotional energy. Buildings for religious use are provided free of charge by the atheistic government. Like everyone else, the clergy pay an income tax, but the state does not tax church income.

A crucial measure of the worth of any society is the condition of its labor. We visited the Lenin-grad Karl Marx Factory Complex, where fabric machines are made. The workers put in an 8-hour day with 45 minutes for lunch. Retirement age in the USSR is 60 for men and 55 for women, but retired people can get another job while collecting retirement pay. Vacations range from three-and-a-half to five weeks a year, depending on length of service and type of work. The trade union officials at the Karl Marx factory asserted that absenteeism and alcohol abuse were not a problem at the plant, there being not more than ten cases of alcoholism among the enterprise's 7,000 workers. When I registered skepticism, one trade unionist replied, "Just because something is a social problem does not mean it must exist everywhere in the society."

Union membership is not compulsory in the Soviet Union, yet some 132 million persons — over 95 per cent of the work force — belong to unions, probably because membership brings a host of benefits and services. At the Karl Marx factory, only about 100 workers are nonmembers, mostly new and young persons; fewer than a score simply do not want to join. Far from being "rubber stamps," Soviet unions participate directly in the planning of production and deal with food and housing needs, travel, health care and work disputes. The unions also finance and manage rest homes, dachas, and tourist camps for their members, and summer Pioneer camps for the workers' children. Smaller enterprises that can not support recreational facilities of their own buy vouchers that enable them to use the resort facilities of larger plants.

Parts of the factory budget can not be ex-

pected by management without permission of the unions. Managers can not fire workers without trade union approval, but trade union commissions can fire managers and other supervisors. They can close the shop or factory and remove persons from their jobs because of misuse of power or violations of occupational safety or other such reasons. Over the last few years, thousands of officials, from immediate supervisors to top directors, have been removed from their positions by trade union action, so claimed one union leader. If all this is true, I can understand why American union leaders like William Winpisinger, vice-president of the AFL-CIO, and AFSCME officer William Lucy, both of whom recently returned from the USSR, talked about the "important" and "meaningful" role played by Soviet unions. Their comments received scant notice in the U.S. press.

The "profits" of a Soviet enterprise are the difference between the cost of production and the price set by the state. Part of these profits goes to the state budget, part to expand production, and the largest portion goes to the workers in the form of bonuses, social welfare and recreational facilities.

The professed goals of the trade unions are (1) protecting the interests of workers and (2) participating in the planning and fulfillment of production goals. "But doesn't the concern with production and profits leave managers and union officials less inclined to give top priority to the interests of workers?" I asked at one of the several meetings we had with trade union people. "Since a more productive plant brings better wages and services for workers," answered one official, "we do not see the goals as incompatible." Furthermore, "Profits are not in command; they are only one of several considerations determining rewards," asserted another. For instance, electronics work has a higher rate of profitability than coal mining, yet coal miners are among the highest paid workers while electronics workers are not, mostly because mining is a more arduous, hazardous occupation. Some mines are unprofitable yet they are kept open because the nation can use the coal and it gives miners jobs, an arrangement that would be impossible under capi-

talism.

An undesirable feature of the Soviet Union, we are taught in school, is that, unlike the United States, it is not a "pluralistic" society. If by "pluralism" we mean the existence of a multiplicity of groups and institutions sharing in power and competing over policy outputs, then an argument could be made that the USSR is far from being the totalitarian monolith it is usually made out to be. Within the framework of Soviet institutions — but only within that framework — there seems to be freedom to debate policies and priorities. However, there is no freedom to advocate alternative systems such as capitalism, nor, for that matter, anarchism, monarchy, feudalism or slavery.

But what about democracy? When we asked a woman we met in Gorky Park, she emphatically asserted that the Soviet people live in a democracy because "we pick our own leaders and they are obliged to follow policies that reflect our desires and interests." She was accompanied by her sister and husband, both of whom agreed with her view, a view about the "Soviet regime" that sounds strange to most American ears.

I heard similar expressions of support for the existing system from the several other people I asked, specifically a construction worker and a truck driver in Baku, a bus driver and a hotel employee in Moscow and one of the workers in the Leningrad factory we visited. When I asked the Leningrad worker, who had been elected by his comrades to head his work team, "Whom are you working for? Is it the Party leaders, the state, or management, or society, or whom?" he smiled and said, "We are working for ourselves. The working class is the master of this society." When I asked if he really meant that, he grew more insistent. "Da, da, da, da." Whether or not the Soviet Union qualifies as a democracy by Western textbook standards, a lot of its people seem to think they are free and are living under a system that works to their advantage, a sentiment less likely to be found in places like Chile, Paraguay, Indonesia or Pakistan.

I asked one of the drivers of our tour bus why he and his coworkers never went on strike. "Why should we take such a drastic action?" he an-

sered. "We would be striking against ourselves. If we have any grievances against the manager, we have the trade union, the Party, the People's Control Commissions, the press and other ways to change things." The dread scourges of layoff and economic want, which are the whip of labor discipline in capitalist nations, do not seem to be hanging over this man's head.

How, then, is labor discipline achieved under Soviet socialism? Through a system of political education, pay bonuses, awards and honors. But the struggle against "parasitism" indicates that these efforts do not have the desired effect on some workers.

The lavish coverage the U.S. press gives to the small coterie of Soviet dissidents might leave us with the impression that everyone in the USSR is aching to overthrow the government or to defect to the West. When I asked a young medical student who spoke fluent French whether she would like to live in Paris, she said she would very much enjoy a visit to France but had no desire to live anywhere but in the Soviet Union. A 22-year-old university graduate I met in Baku said that in four years she had not observed dissident activity at her university. "It is possible dissidents exist there but I never heard of any, so I think their numbers can not be very great. There are students who like Western music and literature, as do I, but I can not say there is much political disaffection. We Azerbaijani know how terrible life was before the Revolution, so we support the socialist system," she said.

One thing seems to be on the mind of every Soviet citizen: the concern for peace. Again and again people wished us, "Happiness and good health to you and your families, and peace between our nations," or words to that effect. At a trade union health spa on the Caspian sea, one worker was more explicit: "Tell that scoundrel President Reagan that we want peace!"

We visited the Leningrad Peace Committee, described by its director as a private group with a staff of four people, supported by funds from cooperatives, unions, students and religious groups, "and not a kopek from the government." Like the churches, the peace movement is largely

self-supporting, although the government does provide office space. In 1982, the director claimed, there were 60,000 major peace activities involving an estimated 60 million people in the USSR. She added that 12 million Soviet citizens signed the nuclear freeze petition presented to the United Nations and that in a recent demonstration 100,000 Leningrad citizens marched, carrying signs demanding, "No missiles East or West." In addition, there have been peace rallies, lectures, exhibitions and theater presentations. Few of these peace activities are reported in the Western press or in the progressive and Left-wing press except to be dismissed as "government sponsored."

Many in the West presume that the government's support of the massive Soviet peace movement divests that movement of its legitimacy, and that the movement must be but a cover-up for the government's militaristic policies. The Supreme Soviet and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR have both unanimously passed nuclear freeze resolutions virtually identical to the ones carried in referenda throughout the United States. But this too has been largely ignored by those who make no distinction between a government that supports its peace movement and a government, such as our own, that trivializes, denounces and Red-baits U.S. peace activists. Instead, the U.S. media have focused our attention on a tiny number of Soviet dissidents who have tied the demand for peace—which the Soviet government encourages—to a demand for organized political opposition against the socialist system—which the government does not tolerate. The impression left is that Soviet authorities suppress all peace activists.

Not only is there a mountain of blatant disinformation about the Soviet Union, there is also a negative conceptual framework that transforms any data about that nation

into hostile evidence. If the Soviets refuse to negotiate a point, this shows they are intransigent and belligerent; if they show themselves eager to negotiate and make concessions, this is but a skillful propaganda ploy. If they were to oppose the nuclear freeze, they would be militaristic; but since they support the freeze, they are mendacious and manipulative. If the churches were empty, this would show that religion was repressed; but if the churches are full, this shows the people are rejecting the regime's atheistic ideology and are turning to God. If the workers go on strike, this is evidence of their unhappiness in the face of economic injustice; but if they don't strike, this is because they are intimidated and lack freedom. A scarcity of consumer goods demonstrates the failure of the socialist economy; an abundance of goods means only that the leaders are attempting to placate a restive populace and so maintain a firmer grip on state power.

The cold-war, anti-Communist presumption of evil is so strong that both A and not-A can serve as proof of Soviet venality. There is really no need to go see for yourself, because we already "know" what they are like. Anti-Sovietism is a nonfalsifiable proposition.

Not long after I returned to the United States, the Soviets shot down a Korean Air Lines 747 carrying 269 passengers. As if on cue from Ronald Reagan, the press and the Congress treated this tragic incident as the natural outcome of Soviet "inherent viciousness," "inhuman brutality," "malice," "savagery" and "subhuman behavior." *Washington Post* editor Meg Greenfield characterized the Soviet Union as "an uncivilized and barbaric nation." At the risk of incurring the wrath of our cold warriors and jingoists, I must say her description bears no resemblance to the place I visited.

BOOK ENDS

'Reagan's Reign of Error'

Mark Green and Gail MacColl, *Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1983, 127 pages, \$4.95.

"Reagan Says Arms Buildup Improves Chances for Peace," runs the headline on a *New York Times* story, January 14, 1984. You can add that one to Reagan's designation of new omniscidal nuclear missiles as "Peace-keepers." And you can add both of them, and lots more, to the over 300 Reaganite falsehoods collected in a book which anti-Reaganism campaigners from all points in the political compass will find useful this year.

Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error provides valuable ammunition exposing the real Reagan behind the actor's mask. Here are a few examples:

"Unemployment insurance is a pre-paid vacation for freeloaders." (*Sacramento Bee*, April 28, 1966.)

"... a faceless mass waiting for handouts." — Reagan's description of Medicaid recipients (1966).

"I favor the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and it must be enforced at the point of a bayonet if necessary." (*Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 20, 1965.) And eight months later, "I would have voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964." (*Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1966.) And isn't it a fact that the Reagan Administration is out to dismantle all the civil rights gains of the last 20 years?

"Real earnings are at last increasing for the first time in quite a while." (May 16, 1982.) At the same

JIM WEST

time Reagan's own Labor Department reported real weekly earnings had declined 1.2 per cent.

"We are not trying to do anything to try and overthrow the Nicaraguan government." It is, of course, an open secret that Washington wages an undeclared war against Nicaragua.

In October 1982 the Pentagon had 400 warheads on submarines in the Atlantic and Mediterranean targeted on the Soviet Union. Also on these subs were an additional 4,500 warheads not officially committed to NATO. Great Britain had 192 and France 98 warheads targeted on the USSR. In addition, the bomber forces of the U.S. and NATO had the capacity to drop well over 1,000 nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union. It was then that President Reagan declared, "Now, the Soviets have 945 warheads aimed at targets in Europe in their medium-range missiles. And we have no deterrent whatsoever. . ." (Oct. 14, 1982.)

At a time when Richard Pipes, senior adviser to the National Security Council, affirmed that it was official U.S. policy to wage a "winnable nuclear war," and in the face of the fact that the Soviet leadership had declared nuclear war unwinnable and suicidal, Reagan said, with what looked like a straight face, "unlike us, the Soviet Union believes that a nuclear war is possible and they believe it is winnable." (Oct. 17, 1981.)

The authors point out that in 1981 the "defense" budget was 14 billion

dollars higher than in 1971. To Reagan this meant, "During the past 10 years, the U.S. decreased its military spending." (Jan. 14, 1982.) And in 1981, Reagan said the U.S. unilaterally disarmed during the '70s, when, in fact, it had 4,000 strategic nuclear warheads in 1970 and almost 10,000 by the end of the decade.

Green and MacColl make an interesting study of the different ways in which Reagan plays fast and loose with the truth. They list six ways in which he lies, although they are reluctant to call them lies: obvious exaggerations; material omissions; contrived anecdotes; voodoo statistics; denials of unpleasant facts and flat untruths.

And they undertake to give six reasons for Reagan's lies: "ideology before evidence"; "out-of-date, out-of-touch"; "habit-forming" (a carryover from his career in movies and radio); "intellectual laziness"; "isolation"; "the amiability factor."

Undoubtedly, these are factors in the Reagan makeup which help explain some of the whys and hows of his all-time high in presidential lying.

But they don't explain why every president since World War II has lied, and they especially do not explain why there is a qualitatively new element in the pathological lying of the Reaganites, a kind of free and easy lying that is endemic to Reaganism.

For when the president of the United States, the man with his finger on the doomsday button, can assert about Trident missiles that "once launched, they can always be called back," then he is playing fast and

loose not only with the truth, but with the lives of millions of people.

And because the fate of the world is at stake, because "we must deal with questions and forces that will determine whether there will be a future of war or peace, nuclear arms race or disarmament" (Main Report to the 23rd National Convention, CPUSA), the authors fall short of providing the necessary insight that can insure the defeat of not just Reagan, but Reaganism as well.

But for this, it is necessary to understand that the issue is Reaganism, and not simply a warped or defective personality in the White House. Replacing Reagan with someone who has no fundamental political differences with Reagan will also leave official lying essentially intact.

Further, the authors are blind to the politics of defeating Reagan, ignoring the question of which forces benefit from and which oppose his policies, and ignoring the objective meaning of Reaganism. The authors show themselves to be influenced by the poison of anti-Communism, which is one of the main ingredients of Reaganism. Thus Mark Green writes, "when presented with a situation that challenges his conservative catechism, like an unyielding Marxist-Leninist, he [Reagan] will change not his mind but the facts." (Page 12.)

And what is it that Marxist-Leninists — for example, the leadership of the Soviet Union — are unyielding about? To be sure, they do not yield to Reaganite nuclear blackmail threats, his phony "zero option," his economic trade sanctions, his demands that the Soviet Union stop aiding countries fighting for national liberation. One shudders to think where the world would be if they did yield to Reaganism!

What, then, is Reaganism, which has as little in common with Marxism-Leninism as Nazism had?

Reaganism is the policy of the most bellicose wing of U.S. state monopoly capitalism, trying to assert world supremacy by military dominance, by nuclear blackmail. It is aggression against the working class in power, first of all the Soviet Union, and at home an all-sided attack on the living standards, wages, conditions and unions of the working class. It is born-again unrestrained racism at home and racism abroad in support of apartheid South Africa and undeclared wars against the freedom-seeking peoples of the Caribbean and elsewhere. This is the meaning of its anti-Communism.

Toward these ends, extreme demagoguery is second nature to Reaganism. The symbol of demagoguery may well become the image of Reagan extending an ersatz olive branch to the "empire of evil." Demagoguery, too, is a form of lying.

Reaganism is based on contempt for the people, on the concept that it is easy to fool the people and, more, that the people want to be fooled.

Instructive to an understanding of the methods of Reaganism is the following:

The size of the lie is a definite factor is causing it to be believed, for the vast masses of a nation are in the depths of their hearts more easily deceived than they are consciously and intentionally bad. The primitive simplicity of their minds renders them a more easy prey to a big lie than a small one, for they would be ashamed to tell big ones. . . . Propaganda must not serve the truth, especially not insofar as it might bring out something favorable for the opponent. . . . No matter how successfully propaganda is presented it will not lead to success unless a fundamental principle is considered with continually sharp attention; it has to confine itself to little and to repeat this eternally. Here, too, persistency, as in so

other many things in this world, is the first and foremost condition of success.

These quotations are from Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

And Mussolini pronounced this gem, "Our motto must be to lie in order to conquer." (Quoted by Roman Dombrowski in *Mussolini: Twilight and Fall*, 1956.)

These words by two of history's most notorious anti-Communists do more to bring into sharp relief the meaning of Reagan's lies than the purely subjective, psychological analysis of *Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error*. For example, while Greene and MacColl take note of Reagan's repeated telling of a lie even after it has been called to his attention, they are at a loss to explain why, other than "habit," he does it. But responsible and scientific analysis must not ignore the purposes to which repeated lies, and especially repeated big lies, are put.

The authors note that "the issue of presidential truth and consequences has long been with us." And they are right. But why? Is it because of some peculiar "American" trait?

Or is it because in the political superstructure of U.S. society, supposedly based on the principle that "all men are created equal," one class rules and the working class is excluded from real power? And that this political superstructure rests on a capitalist economy, a system of private profits which in theory is the best for all the people, but which in reality is a system of exploitation of some people by others?

So it is not surprising that lying, deception, dissembling, demagoguery are built into the political system of capitalism, and that truth telling is so rare a quality among U.S. presidents that history has accorded the appellation of "honest" to but one of them.

But when we deal with Reaga-

nism, we are not dealing with the ordinary run of lying that is customarily associated with the occupant of the White House. We are dealing with a new quality in the area of lying — lying on a scale that can only be compared to Hitler. History shows that such unbridled lying comes into play when a government embarks on an all-out anti-Soviet, anti-labor, anti-liberation, racist and militarist policy.

As Richard Halloran observes in the *New York Times Magazine* (Jan. 15, 1984), "President Reagan . . . represents a return to a reliance on military power to achieve political objectives."

But disastrous as Hitler's lies were in the toll of human life and suffering they brought about, Reagan's lies are flung at us at a time when nuclear weapons exist capable of extinguish-

ing all life on earth.

The exposure of Reagan's lies is not a parlor pastime for the purpose of laughing at some bumbling ignoramus in the White House. There were those who laughed at Hitler as though he could be ridiculed out of existence. It was a dangerous underestimation for which the world paid dearly. This time far more is at stake.

That is why, welcoming *Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error*, we say that it is not enough. All the more is it necessary to bring the report of Gus Hall to the 23 National Convention of the CPUSA to the widest possible audience in our country. All the more is it necessary to vastly increase the readership of that guardian of truth, the *Daily World*. These are the most effective weapons available in the momentous struggle to defeat Reaganism in this fateful year.

'Silkwood'

JUDITH LEBLANC and CAROLE MARKS

The movie *Silkwood* is to the struggle against the monopoly-controlled nuclear power industry what *The Day After* is to the struggle against nuclear war.

When *Silkwood* opened in Oklahoma — its real-life setting — the mass media launched a campaign against it. They attacked the film for oneness, misrepresentation and slander. Just as they had during the three-month federal trial in Oklahoma City, which heard the facts on which the movie is based, the mass media tried to convince people, especially workers, that the Kerr-McGee corporation, and not Karen Silkwood, was the innocent victim. They tried to convince moviegoers that Kerr-McGee wasn't guilty of criminal negligence, of plutonium contamination of its workers, of gross carelessness in the handling of radioactive materials and total disre-

gard of health and safety standards — and ultimately of murder to keep its crimes in the corporate closet.

The federal court found Kerr-McGee guilty of "grossly negligent disregard for the safety of Karen Silkwood" and awarded \$10 million in damages to her three children. The federal Atomic Energy Commission found the corporation did not provide adequate occupational health and safety training to its workers and the plant was closed. But Karen was dead and many more workers were exposed to potentially disease-causing doses of plutonium.

This film is released at a time when working people are becoming increasingly aware that Big Business is the root cause of our country's problems. These anti-corporate, anti-monopoly sentiments are fertile soil for a movie like *Silkwood*. The campaign to discredit *Silkwood* failed.

Millions are seeing and believing it.

In fact, there are a growing number of movies and TV films portraying how women workers play pivotal roles in the forefront of the class struggle. Movies like *Babies and Banners*, a documentary of the Flint auto sitdown strike which resulted in the organization of the UAW, *Norma Rae*, a movie about the organization of textile workers, and the most recent made-for-TV docudrama *A Matter of Sex* (about the Willmar Eight), all portray struggles of women workers and their contributions to the organization and victories of the trade union movement.

Silkwood is a film with a message. In the words of one of its screenwriters, Nora Ephron, Kerr-McGee placed greater "value on their products than on the value of their workers." Profits before people, that's the bottom-line message.

This film is about Karen Silkwood's life as a worker, a life full of physical and psychological pressure from the constant threat of radioactive contamination; a life of terror and harassment from the company and its stooges.

Karen came to see working with the union as the only way to protect and defend the rights of the workers. She came to see she could not walk out on it all — as her boyfriend, Drew, decided to do. She could not turn her back on her coworkers, on the union. And she didn't.

The film convincingly shows how a young working-class woman develops, stage by stage, into a trade union fighter. She is drawn into the class struggle — not only because she decided to, but because she had to. The portrayal of Karen depicts how objective conditions mold consciousness.

Although the film never explicitly says the Kerr-McGee Corporation killed Karen, the closing scene will leave most viewers no doubt about

what happened. She is run off the road on her way to an interview with a *New York Times* reporter in which she intended to expose the corporation.

The end of this movie leaves one feeling sad, angry and frustrated. We don't leave with a sense of the potential for class unity and victories. It is the convictions and actions of a single individual that we admire. But going it alone can not win.

In this portrayal, Karen's oddball, out-of-the-mainstream lifestyle does not help to win over the workers in her plant. Nor does it trigger the empathy of the movie audience.

However, despite Karen's personal confusion portrayed in the

film, she came to understand what was essentially a class problem and to become an actor in the class struggle. Like all workers, she became radicalized by experiences that taught her a deeper understanding of real life.

We should note that Karen's real-life boyfriend was quoted as saying that the film was accurate, but that "Karen's personal life was highly fictionalized." If the movie stumbles, it is here. Including and sensationalizing the negative aspects of Karen's life mute the message of the movie.

A comparison of *Silkwood* and *A Matter of Sex* makes the point. Even though the Willmar women workers in *A Matter of Sex* did not win their

union organizing fight, the film projects the best of working-class attitudes, humanism, militant tactics and unity. In every scene, we identify with their struggle and lives. You can't miss the message that when working-class people fight back they can win!

In spite of some weaknesses, *Silkwood* is a fine, rare film, especially considering it comes from the commercial film industry at just the right moment.

Silkwood is a technically well-done, superbly-acted film. The whole cast is great, but Meryl Streep is super-great. She should win another Oscar for this one.

Don't miss it.

(Continued from page 15)

1) Hebrews, 13:3. The abolitionists repeatedly referred to this verse. (See Eileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism. Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1969, pp. 237, 261-262.)

2) William Z. Foster, *The Negro People in American History*, International Publishers, New York, 1982, pp. 105-106.

3) Walter M. Merrill, *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume I: I Will Be Heard!, 1822-1835*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1971, pp. xxvii, 75. It will be noted that not only the emancipation of the Black slaves, but that of *all* human beings was addressed by the title of this paper. In the course of the years Garrison often reverted to this point, e.g. in *The Liberator* (December 15, 1837), which he later edited. In addition to his efforts to bring about the downfall of the slave system and the worldwide liberation of all men Garrison championed peace and equal rights for women. (See Kraditor, *op. cit.*, p. 86, 87.)

4) Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, Volume I: Early Years, 1817-1849*, International Publishers, New York, 1975, p. 29.

5) *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831, in Merrill, *op. cit.*, cover.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 203.

7) Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*, Case Western Reserve University Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1969, p. 102.

8) *Ibid.*

9) *Ibid.*

10) Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1969, p. 71.

11) Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free. Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861*, Atheneum, New York, 1974, pp. 71-72.

12) Quarles, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

13) *Ibid.*, p. 108.

14) Foner, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

15) Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History, Volume I, To 1898*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973, p. 279.

16) *Ibid.*

17) Quarles, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

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