

THE POWER OF IDEOLOGY

GUS HALL



Keynote Address to the
First Ideological Conference
of the Communist Party USA
July 14-16, 1989, Chicago



Gus Hall was elected general secretary of the Communist Party USA in 1959, and national chairman in 1987. He has run several times as a candidate of the Communist Party for president of the United States.

He was born on the Iron Range of Minnesota. As a young man he worked as a laborer, lumberworker and steelworker. He was a founding organizer of the United Steel Workers of America and a leader of the Little Steel Strike in 1937. During World War II he served in the Navy in the Pacific.

In 1927, Gus Hall joined the Communist Party. During the McCarthy period, he, along with other leaders of the Communist Party, was the victim of a cold-war political prosecution under the repressive Smith Act. He served eight years in Leavenworth prison for the crime of "thinking."

Hall is the author of *Working Class USA; Fighting Racism; Karl Marx: Beacon for our Times; Racism, the Nation's Most Dangerous Pollutant; Imperialism Today; Ecology: Can We Survive Under Capitalism; The Energy Rip-Off* and scores of other books, pamphlets, articles and essays. Many of these works have been translated into other languages and distributed widely.

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**Gus Hall, National Chairman
Communist Party USA**

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The Class Struggle

The definition that has been used ever since Marx's time describes ideology as "a system of political, legal, religious, aesthetic and philosophical views and ideas."

Marxists add the key concept that "in a class society ideology is of a class character."

The nature of ideology does not easily lend itself to a simple dictionary definition, because it is not a precise set of principles, rules or axioms. It is not a platform or program. But ideology is a very necessary prerequisite, a framework, for drawing up platforms and programs, for developing strategy and tactics.

Without ideology, ideas are weightless. They are floaters. Ideology does for the thought process what gravity does for the planetary system. It lines up the heavenly bodies into an orderly, law-governed system.

The ideology of the capitalist class is easier to define. Generally called simply bourgeois ideology, its sole purpose is to defend and cover up for the capitalist system of exploitation for corporate profits. Capitalist ideology has an advantage in a capitalist society because it is the ideology of the ruling class.

Our ideology is more difficult to characterize. Some call it workingclass ideology; others call it the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, or socialist ideology. Still others call it Communist ideology. I will simply refer to it as our ideology, because it is just that — ours.

This is not the first time our Party is discussing the ideological side of the class struggle. It is an important part of the history of the Party.

Ten years ago, Comrade Henry Winston said,

In talking about practice we are referring to a whole gamut of things. This includes the ideological struggle because in that struggle is the fight for our theory, for our science, against a ruling class which has



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The first ideological conference of our Party is just beginning. Yet, in many ways, we can say it is already a success. During the preparation period for this conference most of us have been compelled to think about ideology and to think ideologically. For many of us the preliminary groundwork and the pre-conference process has been a singular and extraordinary experience. In many ways the preparation process has already made an important contribution to our Party's ideological clarity and maturity.

The great majority of written contributions to the conference that have come in have a serious, innovative approach to ideological questions. They deal honestly and constructively with both the positives and negatives. Some articles, however, are from comrades with mistaken concepts of what our ideology is. A few others have difficulty seeing ideology as it is related to the class struggle.

Many of us have spent time looking for a clear, precise definition of ideology. The fact that we are searching for a definition is an indication that perhaps in the past we should have spent more time studying what ideology is. The definition would then flow naturally and logically.



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its own ideology, an ideology of exploitation and racial and national oppression. Ours is an ideology that commits us to a struggle for the elimination of exploitation and oppression. (*Political Affairs*, May 1980.)

Thirty-five years ago, Comrade William Z. Foster wrote,

The Communist Party of the United States cannot be some vague "Marxist" party, without a real theoretical and ideological basis. It must be founded solidly upon the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, skillfully adapted to the American situation. This is doubly necessary because the perspective ahead for the working class and its allies is one of sharp struggle. . . . Any other outlook is nonsense, especially when one speaks in terms of the eventual establishment of socialism in this country. For the American working class a Marxist-Leninist party is indispensable to enable it to face up to the hard struggles ahead. (*Political Affairs*, October 1956.)

And, forty-three years ago, Comrade Eugene Dennis observed,

The great founders and teachers of Marxism-Leninism taught us by their uncompromising struggle for principle that the battle for the purity of Marxism has to be waged, not only against the ideology of the class enemy, but also, and often with great stress, against the infiltration of hostile ideas within the workingclass movement and even within the Party itself. (Report to National Committee, February 12-15, 1946.)

It is interesting to note how relevant these words are for today.

A system of thought

In general, ideology serves as a framework, an overall backdrop. In a sense, it is a political and philosophical conditioned reflex. (It is often expressed unconsciously.)

A mastery of workingclass Marxist ideology gives us a unique way of looking at all phenomena in life. It molds our attitudes about everything. In fact, it even becomes a part of our

personal character. Ideology acts as a political stabilizer. It is not a list of ideas. It is a single harmonious whole, a system of thought. Thus, a flaw or weakness in any part infects and cripples the whole.

Ideology is one of the three main forms of the class struggle. The other two are the political and economic features. It is true that philosophical concepts are also class-related, but because philosophy also deals with questions that are not directly related to the class struggle, it does not play the same role as the politics, economics and ideology.

Thus, the first principle of ideology is that it is a distinctive feature on both sides of the class struggle.

Once we accept this, there is a clear line of demarcation, of division and opposition, between the ideology of the working class — Marxism-Leninism — and the ideology of the capitalist class — bourgeois ideology. One is the ideology of the exploited and the other the ideology of the exploiters. The two ideologies are mutually exclusive opposites.

The struggle in the ideological arena is as inevitable, as inescapable and as relentless as is the class struggle itself. The two opposing ideologies are locked in mortal combat. Ideology determines which side you are on.

Describing the two schools of philosophy, Karl Marx said,

They do not need each other. They do not supplant each other. The one does not have in its bosom the longing for, the need for, the anticipation of the other.

This fully applies to ideology. Neither of the two class-based ideologies can be turned on or off. They emerge from and are molded by the objective class reality. They do not blend or harmonize. There can be no ideological convergence. There is no third ideological system. Comrades should not waste their time searching for one, especially since most who seek a third way land in the bourgeois ideological camp.

Some may call this approach dogmatic. I call it the scientific truth, because the stubborn fact of life is that in a class society, the class struggle sets the rules of the game. We all have but two choices in the matter. We can choose to be on one or the other

side of the ideological ramparts. There is no room for straddling the fence.

In a family fight, silence may indicate neutrality. But in the ideological struggle, silence is not neutrality. Monopoly capital is ever ready to pay big money for the silence of workers in the ideological struggle.

Class consciousness is very much a feature of the environment in which our workingclass ideology takes root and grows. Marxist, socialist ideology is an extension and maturation of class consciousness. There can be no workingclass ideology without class consciousness.

For us, ideology is a way of thinking and a guide to action. It is possible to be a member of the Party and not be guided fully by our ideology. We do have some members like that. But I do not think it is possible to be a leader in our Party on any level for very long and not be guided by our ideology.

Our ideology adds an indispensable dimension to our ability to lead. Therefore, the struggle to master ideology is of critical importance to thought and action. If we do not become masters of our ideology, we are in constant danger of becoming wavering summer soldiers.

Thus, the first resolve of this conference should be that we will raise the mastery of our ideology to a new level.

Ideological distortion

revisionism.

In our Party, over the years we have been pointing out that what we call Browderism was fed by an ideological distortion. Earl Browder was the General Secretary of our Party. We use the term Browderism because there were many besides Browder who were involved in the "new thinking" of the Teheran days.

Teheran was the historic conference between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill which dealt with the defeat of fascism and outlined the nature of the postwar world. Browder and the Party leadership drew the wrong conclusion that this alliance could continue after the war and that imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, would give up its aggressive ambitions.

The crime of Browderism was not in new thinking. There is always a need for new thoughts. The crime was in the wrong kind of new thinking. This wrong kind of new thinking dis-

carded the concept of class struggle, and in its place substituted the ideology of the enemy class.

It is now clear that in that period our Party was not deeply rooted enough in the ideology of Marxism and our class. I think our Party has learned big lessons from that experience.

However, one club submitted a discussion article arguing that the terms "class struggle, working class and capitalist class" are outdated and "do not mesh with the reality of people's lives." For these comrades, a study of the coal miners and Eastern Airline strikers, two of the most outstanding examples, should serve as a refresher course in the class struggle. For these workers, the words "class struggle, working class and capitalist class" are very much a part of their lives.

The struggle between the two ideologies takes place on two levels of reality.

In a general, overall sense the ideological struggle takes place more in the arena of thought patterns and philosophy. On the second level, in the on-going daily struggle, it takes place more over specific ideas and concepts that relate to the tactics of the class struggle.

On the general level, it is over attitudes that are based in class ideologies. For example, it is not difficult to pinpoint the ideology of a congressman when he says, "If we do not take some action to cut Medicare now, we face the danger that we may have to cut military spending to fund Medicare. And eventually we may be spending more on health care programs than on weapons production."

Or take another example. One of the biggest real estate slum lords in New York is on trial for not paying taxes. A witness quoted this billionaire slum lord as saying, "We don't pay taxes — only the little people pay taxes."

From our ideological viewpoint, such talk is criminal. From the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie, reflecting the morality of the exploiting class, the congressman and the slum lord were only expressing a capitalist reality.

There is no humanism in the ideology of the capitalist class. Our ideology is rooted in humanism, a genuine concern for human welfare above all.

Thus, the overall struggle between the two ideologies is over attitudes, morality, ethics. It is over the approach to the

human condition. It is over such questions as whether capitalism is here to stay, whether history has a long-term progressive direction, or whether exploitation of people to enrich oneself can ever be justified or defended without deception and lying.

Ideology of denial

The main aim of the ideology of slavemasters, feudal lords and now the capitalist class is to cover up and deny the existence of the class struggle. The ruling class argues that they have a God-given right, a pre-ordained commandment to exploit.

They are out to convince people that without them the social system would disintegrate. They want people to believe that this is how the world has always been and how it will always be. They advocate and perpetuate concepts of mutual interest and class collaboration to camouflage the class struggle.

Does this capitalist ideology have an effect on the thought patterns of the working class and the people in general? If it did not, the struggle for socialism would be a waltz to victory.

Slavery and feudalism were terrible systems. But these systems were able to stay on the scene because there were slaves and serfs who were influenced by their masters' ideology, at least to the extent they believed that struggle against the system was impossible.

Capitalism is a very unjust, exploitive system. But it has been on the scene for hundreds of years because there are workers who believe there is no better way. They argue that capitalism provides an incentive for every individual worker and that socialism, a collective society, would do away with this. They argue that the owners of industry invest their money and therefore have the right to make a profit on their investment. And so it goes — on and on.

Capitalist ideology chips away at Communist workingclass ideology. The influence of the dominant bourgeois ideology is the ideological and psychological climate in which the class struggle takes place and our Party has to work in.

Enemy ideology is an obstacle to the development of class and socialist consciousness.

Enemy penetration

Does enemy ideology penetrate the ranks of the left and even our Party? Like all ideological currents, it constantly seeks and finds ways to infiltrate our ranks. It is insidious and subtle.

In non-Communist and anti-Communist left groups there are ideological soft spots where the enemy ideology is able to make an impression. In some of these groups, the words "class struggle and working class" are mere decorative cliches, not the basis for thought and action.

There are others who accept the working class, but not our concept of it. Our concept is that the working class is molded in the production process and thus forced to play an advanced role in the struggle for social progress. This exploitation in the production process — the source of all profits — takes place at the point of production. It is here that the working class produces more than it gets back in the form of wages and benefits. It is the difference between the added value this class produces and what it is paid that is the source of all profits.

This is what has divided capitalist society into classes: the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots. This is the basis of the social volcano called the class struggle.

The struggle between the two main classes also sets the framework for all political activities in the country. Yes, there are other contradictions, other factors that influence the political picture. But the most fundamental and long-range influence is the struggle between the two main classes. The power and the organs of government, and most laws that are passed, are instruments in this struggle.

Culture is also used by the ruling class as a potent weapon. But culture, both bourgeois and workingclass, influences people on an unconscious level. It influences from the inside of developments. No one says, "this is bourgeois culture" or "this is workingclass culture." There are no tags on the outside.

Nevertheless, there is a very clear, distinct difference between the two. Some have indicated that we should not try to use our ideology to influence cultural developments. But this is an integral part of the ideological struggle — to influence thought patterns. However, we should not do so by dictat, but

through the power of our ideology that comes from an accurate reflection of real life.

The ideological struggle in the field of culture is very sharp. It takes place on the stage, the screen, in music, art and poetry. It pervades fiction and non-fiction, especially history.

Culture is also influenced by aesthetics, concepts of beauty, color and form. But the more basic influence is the struggle between the two ideologies. Yes, we take sides in this struggle, as we do in other areas.

At this moment, developments in the cultural field are so reflective of changing thought patterns that we can now speak about a new mass people's and workingclass culture emerging as a powerful force in our society. All the more reason we must use our ideology as never before to creatively influence people's thought patterns through culture.

Class and society

Basically the interests of each class differ from the interests of society as a whole. But as the productive forces, technology and society develop, some variations within this structure take place.

The key words are "variations within this structure." The interests of monopoly capital increasingly tend to run counter to the interests of society as a whole, even though there are moments when the interests of monopoly capital and society do coincide — in specific aspects, in some areas.

On the other side, the interests of society and the working class increasingly tend to move into the same orbit. This is a historic process. As a result, the interests of society as a whole increasingly rest on the shoulders of the working class. There is no basic contradiction here.

As this process continues, the working class is forced to take the lead in all struggles for human progress. The new areas where workingclass interests and the interests of the whole society coincide are:

- Saving the world from nuclear disaster;
- Putting an end to and cleaning out the pollution of racism;
- Ending the pollution of the environment (incidentally,

our Party put out the very first pamphlet on pollution, the environment and capitalism — 15 years ago);

- Curing illnesses such as AIDS and drug addiction.

These are important factors which must be taken into consideration, tactically and otherwise. But it is most important to keep in mind that these new factors do not remove or eliminate the basic irreconcilable class contradiction. There is a dialectical relationship — not one or the other. Attempts to replace one with the other, the attempt to downplay one by overemphasis on the other, are distortions of reality. And it is unnecessary to counterpose the interests of the working class and the interests of society as a whole.

However, it is necessary to ask what happens to the two ideologies when the interests of the class and society move into the same orbit. Workingclass, Marxist-Leninist ideology has no problem dealing with universal interests and class interests in the same orbit.

The same cannot be said about the self-interests and the ideology of the capitalist class. The drive for maximum corporate profits is in contradiction with the practical measures that have to be taken by the corporations in the interests of society.

There is a big price tag on ending pollution of the air, land and seas. We know, for example, that the price tag for cleaning up the old toxic waste dumps in the United States is estimated in the trillion dollar range. There is also a big price tag for the military monopolies on ending the extremely profitable nuclear weapons production — for example, there is \$100 million profit on each of the Stealth bombers.

The question is whether the corporations are willing to pay the price of giving up such profits. To this point they have shown no inclination to pay these costs. Monopoly capital has shown no interest in giving up their profits or modifying their ideology to fit the interests of society.

Denying the class struggle

This presents a new problem: How to fit the two ideologies into the new situation. Many ideas are cropping up, some old, some new, some good, and some way off base.

For example, there are many varieties of the “blending” the-

ory. Some attempt to revise, while others work to supplant, workingclass ideology. Others seek to find some superficial common ground with Marxist-Leninist concepts. They are not looking to find common ground for struggle, but rather to dilute Marxism-Leninism.

It is difficult to "blend" when the main objective of capitalist ideology is to instill the idea of the "eternal nature of capitalism," or the idea that workers and capitalists have common interests in the field of production, and that the concept of class antagonisms was but a figment of Karl Marx's vivid imagination. Marx's imagination was innovative, but not even he could conjure up concepts of class exploitation without real-life class antagonisms.

The corporations spend millions on organizing labor-management partnership schemes on the shop floor because these schemes add billions to corporate profits. There is an ideological support base for these class collaborationist shop floor setups, just as there is for trade union leaders to sit on corporate boards.

The ideological theme of blending of the two class interests leads to needless givebacks, to the dismantling of union grievance structures. It chips away at fringe benefits and pushes for more forced overtime. It is called blending of the two class interests, but in real life workingclass interests are sidetracked and workingclass ideology is submerged and diluted.

Variations of ideological blending appear, even in the Party. They appear as:

- Soft peddling the class struggle;
- Ideas that our ideology is "not that important — let's keep it under our hat";
- The idea that we cannot pursue both our ideology and the united front, and therefore must give up our ideology.

The basis for our Communist plus is the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Those who are against the concept of the Communist plus either do not understand or do not accept Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The struggle for the minds of the people, the ideological struggle, is in fact a reflection of the class struggle. This struggle has the most pervasive and profound influence on all political, social, economic and philosophical trends.

In fact, our dispute with those who would deny the very

existence of the working class is a reflection of the class struggle. These are the forces who downgrade, deny or have difficulty in accepting the fact that in the United States we have but one working class, a class that is multiracial, multinational, male-female, younger and older, organized and unorganized — but a single class.

It is a working class that is exploited in the mass production industries, as well as in smaller shops, offices, medical facilities, on the land, etc. This working class is constantly growing in size. Because it is exploited as the producers of surplus value, it is the only — and I mean the only — inherently revolutionary force in society. The one working class is what it is because of its relationship to the class struggle.

Of course there are changes that take place within the ranks of the working class. These are important but they do not change the basic class status of workers. How dirty one's hands get while working or the color of one's shirt are not factors that determine class status. They are signs of one's trade or skill. New technology has brought about some very important changes of this nature.

But these changes have not and cannot change the basic character of the working class. Much of the discussion about the composition of the working class is table talk and serves only to divide and demobilize.

There is no need to argue over where the Party should put its emphasis. The main emphasis on the auto and steel industries is not for New York City. The main emphasis on light industries and office workers is not for Detroit. We are for working with workers wherever they are, with more emphasis on workers in mass production industries.

Anti-workingclass concepts

There are some, including comrades, who cannot accept our position that the class struggle is the power base for all mass struggles, and therefore is the centerpiece in all struggles for human progress. This rejection is an influence of bourgeois ideology.

Anti-workingclass and non-workingclass concepts appear in many disguises. They masquerade behind such ideas as: the

concept that the working class is declining; an effort to put all trade union leaders into the same bag as sellout artists; a rejection of the idea that there is a growing section of the working class and trade union leadership who are moving to the left toward a more militant line.

In one pre-conference article, an old timer asks: "Is it an accurate assessment of reality today to say, as Sam Webb does, that 'the left is a broad and growing trend in the workingclass movement. It embraces a substantial section of the working class that occupies positions in the labor movement's leadership structure and expresses itself through a variety of forms and influences policies and actions of labor at all levels.' "

I think the assessment is basically correct. This growing left trend is evident in many specific struggles:

- The Jobs with Justice campaign;
- The growing number of solidarity actions in support of strikes;
- The role of labor in the last election campaign, including broad support for Jesse Jackson;
- Labor's support for the anti-apartheid movement;
- Labor's support of anti-imperialist movements related to Nicaragua and El Salvador;
- The growing movement to break the State Department / Lane Kirkland ban on relationships with Soviet trade unions.

And we have to add to all this the new relationships of trade union leaders with our comrades in trade union work. In fact, our Party's relationship with an important section of the trade union leadership is growing.

We must also include the important role the left in the trade unions plays in the struggles against racism. I do not think there has been one affirmative action case in which the left in the trade unions have not played a positive role.

The effort to downplay the left in the workingclass movement is just another effort to downplay the role of the whole working class. It is not surprising that in the same piece this comrade calls for a "reconstruction of our theory." It seems likely that this reconstructed theory would downgrade the working class.

Some use the changes taking place in the composition of the

class as the rationale for arguing that the working class can no longer be the advanced force in society. This is but a variation on the old Marcusian doctrine that the working class has become flabby, that the organized white workers in the mass production industries have become the new "labor aristocracy."

One or two comrades sent in pre-conference articles using sleight-of-hand, roundabout formulations to raise questions about our class concept. Not willing to openly reject or oppose the role of the working class, they argue that "if and when the working class does this and that . . ." some listing ten to twelve conditions, "then the working class can play its advanced role." The "if and when" condition is but another way of saying the working class does not play the advanced role and never will.

Of course these comrades do not place such conditions on the role of intellectuals or professionals.

Anti-workingclass influences take many forms around many issues. Some are open, some are back-door, undercover and sneaky. But they all have a single purpose — to downgrade or deny the role of the working class and to dilute or reject the significance of the class struggle. This comes from the influence of capitalist ideology. To downgrade the role of the working class is to downgrade our ideology.

This is the essence of petty bourgeois thinking. This intellectual elitism appears in many small but significant attitudes toward the working class and workingclass comrades.

For some reason they especially pick on the U.S. working class. Some try, but find it impossible, to discuss Marxist-Leninist ideology without relating it to the class struggle. This is an exercise in futility because our ideology is one integrated and harmonious whole. It is much more than the sum of its abstract parts. It is an interrelated, truthful, scientific portrayal of reality, of the real world.

The historic role of the working class is not a matter for some group, organization or individual to decide. Its task flows from its relationship to the means of production and the inherent laws of capitalism.

Workingclass consciousness

A workingclass outlook is shaped by a constantly reinforced understanding on the part of workers that they are not getting a fair shake, that exploitation is unjust and has no moral justification. The knowledge of being exploited by one's own countrymen gives further shape to the outlook of the working class. This tends to give workingclass people a different sense of nation.

The experience of struggling against exploitation itself becomes a part of the cumulative objective framework that molds a workingclass outlook. The class of exploiters has political power. They have the government machinery, the armed forces, the police. They have control over the press, radio and television.

The ideology of the capitalist class justifies the use of governmental authority and force in the interests of a few, even when such use is against the best interests of the people as a whole and of the nation. This is clearly seen in the defense of fascism by some bourgeois ideologists.

The working class under capitalism has no such instruments on its side. Workers are compelled to seek strength in their great numbers. Their only weapon in struggle is the unity of the many.

Mass action and mass movements are concepts that grow from this realization. Disjointed action by individuals is not a workingclass trait. Workers are compelled to seek strength in the great numbers of their class. There is no other section of the population that has such compelling reasons for acting in mass as has the working class. This becomes a feature of workingclass ideology.

These objective factors compel the working class toward the conclusion that all this can be changed. The working class is forced and prepared by its position in capitalist society, by its experiences in struggle, to accept the outlook that, "Yes, it is necessary to resist the exploiters, but what has to be done is to do away with the system that perpetuates the class of exploiters."

And so workingclass consciousness leads in the direction of socialist consciousness. There is no other class or section of the population that is compelled, is pushed to play such a role. This

is why the working class is made and molded, by capitalism, into the leading class.

The working class is also influenced by the growing realization that workers in all capitalist countries are in the same boat. There is the sense of a bond and a community of interests. That unity is strengthened by its bonds of internationalism as labor seeks the progress of the nation in a world of peace, a world without exploitation. Thus internationalism is an important ingredient in the ideology of the working class.

The class struggle has a long history. It is constant. It has its ups and downs, but it never disappears. Each battle is important, but each battle is also only a phase of the long struggle.

This reality is reflected in the workingclass outlook on struggle and in its ideology. The realization that as a class, under capitalism, workers have no place to go, that there is no escape, and that the class will remain also adds to the molding of a workingclass outlook.

The process of alienation that takes place under capitalism pushes non-workingclass people into a feeling of helplessness, to shifts and swings as individuals. Such helplessness and frustration is overcome in the working class because the worker has a class to turn to and from which to gain strength. This, in turn, leads to action, to struggle and collective effort.

Other groups who "rebel" have a different outlook. They approach struggle saying, "I have tried other things, so now I'll give struggle a try."

But the working class is compelled not to view the class struggle as a "try." It is not one option among many. It is life itself.

It was Marx who first stressed that the most revolutionary class, the working class, appropriates the entire progressive legacy of the past, all that which is positive in human achievement. He stressed that the proletariat takes up and represents the interests of all oppressed and suffering humanity. This is part of workingclass ideology.

One of Marx's fundamental ideas is that it is precisely through the pursuit of its own class interest, organizing itself for itself, that the liberation of all humankind would be achieved.

Thus, it is not possible to have a correct understanding of the class struggle and an incorrect attitude toward the working

class. And vice versa. Any wrong attitude toward the working class reflects a wrong attitude about the class struggle. Because a true understanding of the class struggle is so integral to our ideology, an incorrect or distorted understanding or appreciation of it will affect the whole ideological spectrum.

A wrong attitude toward the working class can also lead to a distorted understanding of Party structure, including democratic centralism. On this, Lenin observed:

These attempts strikingly confirm what was already said at the Party Congress about the difference between the points of view of the bourgeois intellectual who attaches himself to the Social Democratic movement and the proletarian who has become conscious of his class interests. For instance, this same "Practical Worker" of the new *Iskra* with whose profundity we are already familiar denounces me for visualizing the Party "as an immense factory" headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee. "Practical Worker" never guesses that this dreadful word of his immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual unfamiliar with either the practice or the theory of proletarian organization. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist cooperation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organize, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has been and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organization (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organization which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory "schooling." Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to understand its importance as an organizing factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to the species of anarchism . . . the anarchism of the "noble" gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.*)

2

The World Ideological Scene

Since we made the decision to call this conference there have been many modifications on the world scene. And, consequently, some comrades who insisted that the main question at this conference should be the developments in the Soviet Union have also modified their position. Some who were determined to challenge our Party's position on several theoretical questions have changed their minds.

Some said we were against perestroika and glasnost, in spite of the fact that our views have been perfectly clear, starting with the report to the Chicago convention in 1987. The article, "The World We Preserve Must be Livable," was not against perestroika or glasnost.

In fact, during the recent period our Party has had direct contact and consultations with more leaders of Communist parties than ever before in our history. These are very important exchanges for our Party.

The content of the discussions about theoretical and ideological questions in the world Communist movement is also changing. There are fewer articles that Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev accurately described as "extreme positions." There is now a growing consensus in the world Communist movement on some basic ideological and theoretical questions. This is an important, positive development.

However, there are still some questions that need deeper study, such as:

- Must Communists give up or modify their ideology in order to work with forces who are guided by bourgeois ideology?
- If Communists call for putting our ideology on the shelf, do we expect the capitalist class to do likewise — to put their ideology on the shelf? And if they do not, then what? Should we give up our ideology because it is not needed? Or because somehow it is flawed and out of date?

● When some say the class struggle is old hat, do they expect the capitalist class to follow suit and give up the class struggle? And when they do not, then what?

● Must we, or should we, pursue a policy of unilateral ideological disarmament in the name of universal human interests?

These kinds of questions cannot be answered in a vacuum. They must be answered in the context of the reality in which we live and work.

There is a growing awareness of the dialectical relationship between the struggle to save humanity from the universal threat of a nuclear disaster, the threat to our environment, and the continuation of the class struggle. Universal interests and the class struggle need not be and cannot be placed in opposition to each other. They must be placed in a dialectical relationship. Dealing with these questions, Comrade Erich Honnecker, General Secretary of the German Democratic Republic's Socialist Unity Party, said,

We retain everything that has merit, throw overboard everything that impedes our advance, and take a new approach to many things.

However, then he added,

We always take a socialist class standpoint which fully accords with the interests of mankind in preserving peace and solving other global problems and springs from a sober analysis of the real world.

On the one hand we do not reduce international relations to "oversimplified class struggle schemes." But we know for a fact, which is daily brought home to us, that the class struggle, the struggle between class interests, continues to be the main driving force of world developments. (*World Marxist Review*, February, 1989.)

In writing articles it is easy to conjure up one's own sense of reality. But in real life no one can escape from the objective laws of social development. The scientific concept of the unity of opposites is a unity in struggle. It is a struggle over which elements will subjugate or dominate the other. That is the essence of the unity of opposites in nature, in society, in philosophy, in ideology. And that is the essence of the class struggle. Unity of opposites in a struggle to take over and subordinate the opposite

force finally results in a qualitative change in nature and a revolutionary transformation of society.

If the element of struggle were eliminated from the unity of opposites, in human affairs as in nature, society would collapse into a black hole — a graveyard of stars that have given up the class struggle.

On war or peace

While not the most burning questions, there are some new formulations that can be interpreted in at least two ways. They are closely related to the ideological struggle.

One of them is an update of the old saying that "war is a continuation of politics by other means." The new formulation, which appears in some theoretical journals, calls for a negation of this concept. They propose that "war can no longer be a continuation of politics by other means." This is, of course, related to the danger of nuclear war.

One interpretation could be that the danger of nuclear confrontation is over. Thus, if there is no longer a danger of nuclear war, there is no need to struggle for disarmament and world peace.

However, we have to look at everything from our vantage point (or disadvantage point!) For example, where in this generalization and in what context do we deal with the military actions of U.S. imperialism by way of surrogate armies — as in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan and Israel? Where do the over 500 U.S. military bases overseas, including the ones in the Philippines and Guantanamo, fit into the equation? In what general context do we place the fact that there is no letup in the plans for Star Wars weapons? And where do we place the \$300 billion dollar war budgets? Or the determination of the Bush Administration to modernize the short range nuclear missiles in Europe? Or the Stealth bomber, or laser beam weapons?

Are these not preparations for war and regional aggression, for military actions in support of U.S. foreign policy? To say that in this new formulation we only mean a world war is begging the question.

Putting all these facts of life into the war or peace equation,

this new formulation, as it appears from this side of the world struggle, seems a little too pat.

The same applies to suggestions that we eliminate ideology in foreign relations. If anything, the Bush Administration has stepped up its use of ideology in foreign affairs.

Bush went to Poland and publicly announced, "We are giving \$100 million dollars, not for you but for U.S. corporations — as seed money to set up their factories in your country." And he told them he would give them even more if they dismantle their socialist industries and permit capitalism to go in with a free hand. Earlier he called on the Soviet troops to leave Poland. How ideological can you get?

It is a fact of life that the dominant sectors of U.S. monopoly capital and the Bush Administration continue to believe that war preparations and war itself are necessary in order to pursue their policies of imperialist aggression. And they have certainly not eliminated ideology from their foreign trade policies.

It is true that the direction of history, worldwide and domestic pressures continue to move toward a situation in which it will be increasingly more difficult for imperialism to pursue war policies. But it would be a mistake for us to say, at this moment, that the peaceful world that we and the socialist countries are fighting for is inevitable, or is at hand. The fight for unilateral disarmament as a pressure on monopoly capital is positive. But it has built-in limitations if imperialism does not respond.

It seems that any new formulations about world affairs must take into account the fact that although the concepts that "war is unthinkable" and "world politics must be carried on by other means" are good, we must keep in mind that the struggle to make these ideas a reality is not over. And without a struggle they will never be a reality.

The ideological struggle is waged by opposing classes on the national and international level. The ideological struggle cannot be checked by mere prohibitions or agreements, so long as even one of the hostile classes adheres to antagonistic principles and pursues contradictory purposes.

As long as opposing classes exist, their conflicting ideologies, views and world outlooks will not disappear. The working class will never be reconciled with an ideology promoting war and oppression. Nor is it conceivable the bourgeoisie will ever

leave the historical scene voluntarily — it will have to be pushed back, and finally out.

Only persistent struggle against imperialist ideology will contribute to the course of preserving and strengthening peace.

New thinking

Comrade Gorbachev and other Soviet comrades have correctly called for new thinking. New thinking is always needed. And there are periods that call for qualitatively new thinking. The world is now passing through such a period. The new thinking the Soviet comrades are calling for is qualitatively new.

In the Soviet Union there is qualitatively new thinking about economic questions by way of the process of perestroika. And glasnost opens Soviet society wider to create the atmosphere for this new thinking.

The policies and the appeals for universal action to save the world from nuclear extinction and ecological disaster are based on such new thinking.

The historic unilateral steps by the Soviet Union to end the nuclear arms race are also based on new thinking. This is good new thinking, resulting in good new developments. These new developments have resulted in steps bringing about a marked decline in anti-Sovietism and lessening world tensions. Even the danger of nuclear war has receded. These are very important results from the new thinking.

Most of the sound new thinking, which is the case with the great majority of the pre-conference articles, presents ideas in the framework of the class struggle and our ideology.

However, as is always the case with new thoughts and ideas, there are always some who distort and misinterpret them. Thus not all that goes under the name of new thinking is new. And some of it is just wrong thinking. In some articles, including some of our pre-conference articles, the new thinking is anything but new.

We should not accept new thinking that negates the class struggle as the motive force of history. We should challenge new thinking that denies the role of the working class as the centerpiece of struggle.

On numerous occasions, Comrade Gorbachev has been

dealing with wrong thinking that masquerades as new thinking. In his speech to a gathering of scientific and cultural workers, Comrade Gorbachev said,

It is claimed in some of the discussions that the boundaries of socialism are too narrow for perestroika. Little by little people are being sold the idea of political pluralism, a multiparty system, and even private ownership.

The inference is that through perestroika it is supposedly impossible to unfold the potential of socialism. In both cases we are dealing with distrust of our system, our people, the Party and our socialist institutions.

But we similarly cannot accept pseudo-scientific views that "socialism has failed," that "the experiment has been unsuccessful" and that socialism is very nearly identical with its distortions in the past. This lagging behind leads to misunderstanding and even to absurd allegations that socialism is retreating and that we have renounced class approaches and the interests of the national liberation movements.

Not reflecting our reality

Let me give some examples of formulations presented in the name of new thinking which raise questions, especially as they relate to our struggles against U.S. state monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

In the May issue of *International Affairs* magazine there is an article that states,

The two systems (capitalism and socialism) are moving in the same direction. In the West private property in the time-honored sense is disappearing. It is becoming cooperative, or rather corporative. The stock market is undergoing a transformation. They want to set up, by means of an electronic stock exchange, something of a guaranteed income distribution system. And this means creating a new society.

That does not reflect our reality.

And there are other examples of confused "new thinking" that appear in articles in the world Communist press, such as:

It is impossible to solve the East-West riddle without putting an end to the profound ideological confrontation that underlies the present world split. We need to overcome not the economic, or spiritual or even political confrontation, but the ideological one.

Another says,

We are witnessing a suspicious ideological fuss around the working class, an obviously artificial concern of a certain split which some mysterious masterminds are trying to effect.

That is just what this conference is all about, "a suspicious ideological fuss." Our concern is not artificial. It is about real life. There is nothing "mysterious" about the class struggle. To overcome the idea that the struggle is created by some "masterminds," the writer should come and spend a week with the coal miners, airline pilots and machinists.

Another statement reads:

It is strange to speak of the irreconcilability of interests of states with different social systems now that even class conflicts within capitalist countries are being waged not in fierce confrontational forms but predominantly through compromises.

Speaking at a Lane Kirkland dinner, Andrei Sakharov said, "Truly it is tragic that in the USSR there are no independent trade unions." Then he called on Kirkland to help build "free" trade unions in the Soviet Union.

We always need new thinking. But simply calling for new thinking about anything and everything is not really new thinking. With such calls there should be examples of how such thinking applies to real life.

Abstract and unsubstantiated "new thinking," when it is about capitalism, has an impact on the U.S. ideological scene. When it affects mass thought patterns in the United States, we cannot be silent. We must challenge this kind of so-called new thinking as a part of our ideological work.

The concept of "de-ideologization" is wishful thinking. To de-ideologize is to give up the struggle.

3

The New Ideological Offensive

Since we decided to call this conference, some new capitalist thinking, some new ideological trends, have appeared on the domestic scene.

Like a squall, a new ideological offensive is blowing in the cold war winds. Gusts of ideological dust are kicked up by this squall: ideas like "communism is dead," "Marxism-Leninism has lost its magnetic attraction" and "capitalism has won the war between the two systems."

These are the front page headlines in big corporate magazines. They are daily and nightly fare on TV and radio. The line is once again that socialism has failed the test of time. Headlines like, "Bush goes to Hungary and Poland and attends funeral service for socialism" are followed by subheads that announce, "the economies of China and the Soviet Union are basket cases" and "socialism looks back to capitalism for salvation."

This new frontal attack is carefully designed not to clash with the decline of anti-Sovietism. It is a frontal attack on the socialist system itself. It is not overtly anti-Soviet.

While he was in France, Comrade Gorbachev said the idea that the East European socialist countries would revert back to capitalism is an illusion. He cautioned that any idea of building a united Europe based on the concept that all Europe will be capitalist "is a dangerous idea."

In an editorial July 8 about Gorbachev's trip to France, the *New York Times* complained that on the one hand Gorbachev "offered promising new thoughts," but lamented his advice that "some would like to see the problem of Europe solved by the displacement of socialism. But I think this is unreal and even dangerous." He cautioned the capitalist world not to expect socialist Europe to "return to the capitalist fold."

This is precisely the purpose of the new ideological offen-

sive. It is the most ideological of any past campaign. That is exactly what Bush is promoting in Poland and Hungary.

The "grand failure"

In his book "The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century," Zbigniew Brzezinski, the point man for all the bourgeois ideologues, lays out the grand design for this new ideological broadside. According to this ex-National Security Advisor and a brain-truster of the Trilateral Commission, the source of socialism's failure is "Lenin, Leninism and the Communist Party."

This attempt to "bury socialism" contains all the venom, distortions and false characterizations that make up the new anti-socialist broadside. For example he wrote:

- "Leninism is the combination of dogmas and organizational regimentation;"

- "Communism is fermenting in the Soviet Union, repudiated in Eastern Europe and commercialized in China — it has become a globally discredited ideology;"

- "Democratic centralism: Lenin's deliberate misnomer for blind obedience."

To Brzezinski, Leninism is the ultimate evil. He poses the proposition that

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

Thus he pronounces perestroika and glasnost "a failure" so long as the leadership does not abandon Leninism and socialism.

The main problem with "The Grand Failure" is that it should have been written as an autobiography!

In an article in *Dissent* magazine, Democratic Socialists of America leader Michael Harrington approvingly quotes Robert Heilbroner as saying,

Less than seventy-five years after it officially began, the contest be-

tween capitalism and socialism is over. Capitalism has won . . . and however deceptive the ideology of a business civilization, it is more believable than that of a socialist one. ("Toward a New Socialism," *Dissent*, Spring, 1989, p. 155.)

Harrington's only objection is to Heilbroner's "underlying assumption that the Soviet Union and similar societies are either examples of or approximations of socialism." It seems Harrington agrees that capitalism has won — but it doesn't matter because the Soviet Union doesn't even "approximate" socialism!

In the same issue of *Dissent*, Lewis Coser has an article entitled "The Death Throes of Western Communism," in which he states,

Communism in Western Europe and most probably elsewhere rather than being an inspiring messianic movement has now become a grotesque relic.

The near demise of communism in all of Western Europe is a historic fact that current commentators have not yet fully appreciated. It is as significant a feature of contemporary history as the rise and fall of Nazism in the thirties. (Page 186.)

Thus, the right-wing section of social democracy adds its "ideological dust" to the right-wing "squall." This represents a minority viewpoint within Social Democracy.

Socialism USA

The main question in the new ideological offensive is: whether socialism. Therefore, we are forced to deal with socialism on an ideological level, on the level of defending the truth about socialism where it is now being built. We must respond to the anti-socialist ideological offensive on all fronts.

The question of "whether socialism" has emerged as a new challenge worldwide. Many in the Social Democratic parties have given up on socialism: they talk more about humanizing capitalism. There are some in the socialist countries who are convinced that giving up principles of socialism is the only path to higher levels of production and technology. And there are some leading elements in some Communist parties who believe

the only way they can become mass parties or even remain as they are is by giving up on Marxist-Leninist principles — including giving up or “postponing” the advocacy of socialism.

The recent electoral victories of the Communist Party of Greece is proof that it is not necessary to give up the principles of Marxism or the class struggle to win in the electoral field. And it is not necessary, not even good tactics, to say, “We are not a part of the world Communist movement.” Opportunist concessions to ruling class ideology is not a viable path to any kind of victory, including socialism. Anti-socialist forces always zero in on such weaknesses.

In many ways, this is a difficult moment for the world Communist movement. There is some confusion. There is some loss of confidence. There is some frustration.

These are momentary problems. They do not in any way affect the direction of history. Capitalism will continue to decay. The objective developments will continue to prepare the soil for socialism.

It is a moment when basics, when our ideology, when our science can and do serve as stabilizers. They give us the ability to see beyond the problems of the present.

The anti-socialist squall will peter out. The crisis of capitalism is deeper than the problems and readjustments socialism is going through. The restructuring — the period of trial and error, and correction — will result in a higher level of socialism, a more democratic and humane socialism.

The question of “whether socialism” also forces us to deal more with the question of what socialism will be like in the United States. As you can see from our agenda, we will have a presentation and a workshop on this subject.

Throughout the years we have misinterpreted our own correct concept that socialism in the United States is not on the order of the day. We interpreted that to mean, “In that case, let’s not even talk about it.”

There is an interesting dynamic taking place on radio talk shows. As a rule, when the issue of socialism comes up the host asks, “When will we get socialism?” And as a rule, the listeners call and ask questions in this vein: “What will it be like? How will it solve the problems we face today?”

We must begin to answer the question: what will it be like?

The fact that there is no precise model of socialism in the world has released us from a dead weight.

Based on our reality, we can say that socialism USA will be different from day one. We will not have to go through a period of what we call a "forced march." We will start from a different, higher level. We will learn from the mistakes of the socialist world. A socialist USA can afford to be more democratic. We will be able to build socialism at a more leisurely pace. We will not face the invasions, boycotts and blockades. We will not be surrounded by hostile armed forces, like the Soviet Union and Cuba have been.

We must begin to sketch the contours of our socialism. We must worry less about when, and speak more about what it will be like.

A partisan approach to socialism

On the ideological level, we must deal with questions like:

- Socialism is not a utopian dream — it is the next inevitable step on the ladder of human progress;

- Socialism is the result of a law-governed process. It is the basic flaws in capitalism that shape the nature of socialism, because socialism is the elimination of those flaws;

- In defending and explaining the changes taking place in the socialist countries, we should start from the premise that we are partisans of socialism and thus our attitude is determined by our ideology.

Bourgeois critics denounce the mistakes, weaknesses and the crimes committed under socialism to attack and destroy the system of socialism. This comes from their ideology.

We should criticize these same mistakes, weaknesses and crimes, but also explain and, yes, defend socialism as a viable system. We should deal with them as mistakes made by our class. And we should understand that socialism has the inner power to correct its weaknesses and mistakes.

The fact that there are some, even in socialist countries, who spend their time searching the archives to find dirt to spread on front pages, does not in any way negate the correctness of our approach.

The crimes of capitalism are crimes of a system that is ba

sically criminal and anti-human in its inner nature. The mistakes, weaknesses and crimes within socialism take place in a system that is basically and inherently human.

In capitalism, such crimes are an inherent part of the system. In socialism they are alien to and a distortion of the system. In socialism they can be corrected. When we criticize, we should aim to help correct the flaws.

There are times when it is not easy to take a partisan position. This is one of those moments. Partisanship does not mean you have to ignore mistakes and even crimes, or agree with them. For example, we are for doing away with capital punishment worldwide, for humanitarian reasons.

Our ideology dictates a partisan attitude, which calls for us to do all we can to explain what brings on mistakes or crimes. We must seek every possible way to defend and recommend socialism, rather than criticize in such a way that is destructive to socialism's image. This approach is dictated by our ideology, if we are to remain true to our cause. It is as close to the truth as it is scientifically possible to be.

This approach is a partisan class approach. But it is not partisanship in the abstract. It is partisanship toward the law-governed direction of history in which the working class has a special task assigned to it by history itself. It is a partisan attitude about the revolutionary role of the working class.

It is a partisan attitude that emerges from the Leninist concept that there can be no impartial social science in a society based on class struggle. It is a partisanship that is not limited or restricted within the boundaries of nations. It is a partisanship of proletarian internationalism.

It is a partisanship that includes the total spectrum of workingclass activities and interests. It is a partisanship in defense and promotion of workingclass culture.

It is the partisanship of an advocate of workingclass ideology, of socialism. It is a partisanship that is inescapable and all-encompassing if one is to be on the winning side of history, of the real world revolutionary process.

In today's world, a true workingclass partisanship must include a partisan attitude toward real, existing socialism, with all its weaknesses and shortcomings.

Thus, the starting point for such a partisan attitude —

which corresponds to the truth — is to reject all the slanders, the big lie, about socialism. It means to deal with problems and weaknesses in the context of the progressive direction of history and the place that socialism occupies in it.

Because the new ultra-right offensive is mainly ideological, it calls for us to launch an ideological counteroffensive.

4 Ideology of Racism & National Oppression

Racism, chauvinism, bigotry, ethnic prejudices, anti-Semitism, discrimination and violence of every kind have always been an integral part of U.S. capitalist society. They have always been a feature of capitalist reality.

More so than in any other country in the world, except South Africa, racism in the U.S. is a deep-seated, historically rooted and critical factor in the economic, political, cultural and ideological life of our country. Together with anti-workingclass prejudices, racism is a primary ingredient of U.S. capitalist ideology.

Racism rests on the purely fabricated hoax of white supremacy and racial superiority. Racism adds billions of dollars to corporate profits. It is precisely in the drive for maximum corporate profits, in the exploitation of the working class and the superexploitation sustained by racism, that the interests of the working class and African-American people come together. It brings these two sectors of our people into focus on a single enemy: the capitalist class, the corporations, banks and landlords.

That is where the racist capitalist ideology is also focused, on profits. It is in the workplace that the racist wage gap takes place. It is in the workplace that discrimination in hiring and promotion takes place. That is why victories in the struggle against racism in areas like housing, education and health care depend largely on victories in closing the economic wage gap.

Thus, our emphasis on workingclass unity, Black-white unity, on industrial concentration, is based on our understanding of the relationship between racism in the workplace, the economic gap and the role of class unity in the overall struggle against racism.

At the Party's 24th National Convention in 1987 we said,

While there has been progress in the struggle against racism, it remains a critical obstacle to class unity. . . . The struggle against racism and against the practice of racial discrimination remains a key element in the molding of workingclass unity. This is not yet fully understood by all white workers. However, for many white workers the question of the need for class unity can be the starting point for the struggle against racism. (Main Report, August 1987.)

Affirmative action

Affirmative action is critical to the struggle against racism in the workplace. That is why the ruling class and racist right-wing forces have always focused their fire against affirmative action. For them, it is a profit issue. The fact is that affirmative action was making headway in the long, hard struggle for equality, especially in the mass production industries and government institutions and agencies.

Increasingly, affirmative action was accepted and supported by white workers. That is why one of the main goals of the Reagan Administration was to dismantle and eliminate all affirmative action programs and destroy its legal foundation. This Reagan goal has been largely achieved.

The five recent Supreme Court decisions have crippled the present and the future of affirmative action and scrubbed even the programs that have been in force for years.

In the Resolution on Afro-American Equality at our last National Convention we said:

Today most white people reject racism, as they understand it. They reject the basic premise of racial superiority. As a result, the monopoly corporations have [ideologically] sugarcoated and repackaged racism.

The open and active advocates of racism are a minority of our people.

We must not accept the idea that nothing can be done about the Supreme Court. Mass protest and pressure on the administration and especially on Congress can force them to pass laws

to restore affirmative action and even restrict the Supreme Court's powers. Because the recent decisions are racist, anti-labor, anti-women, anti-youth as well as racist, a large number of people, across class and racial lines, can be won ideologically to mount a campaign calling for the impeachment of the racist court majority. They are not legally or morally fit to serve in the Supreme Court or any level of the judicial system.

Racism and anti-racism

Racist ideology is a constant factor in everyday life in the United States. The question is: does it penetrate and influence the thought patterns of people, including the working class? Yes, it does. Is it the same as it was twenty or even five years ago? No, it is not. There have been some important civil rights victories. Thought patterns have changed.

It is important to understand the nature of the victories against racism and therefore the changing thought patterns. It is important to understand these changing thought patterns because they are the thought patterns that the struggle against racism must be built on.

There is an overall decline of racist thought patterns. However, simultaneously there is increasing racism in the thinking and actions of government bodies, which is very much connected to the eight years of Reaganite racism and extreme racism in the federal court system.

There is an increase in violence by racist police departments and racist gangs. I do not think these two developments are contradictory. In many ways they are dialectically related.

However, some have drawn wrong conclusions from the victories that have been won against racism. They have decided that racism is not as important an issue as it was. This, of course, promotes the idea that there is no longer a need to carry on struggles against racism. This is producing negative effects. The forces pushing for reverse discrimination concepts and legal cases against affirmative action and desegregation use these negative effects.

As a rule, I do not like to call myself as a witness to history. But I think the following from a *Political Affairs* article written

twenty-two years ago is as relevant today as it was then:

No ideological struggle is easy. However, for forces on the right side of history no ideological battle is ever hopeless. White chauvinism has deep roots in our society, but it is not unconquerable. In fact, considerable progress has been made during the past years. It will be burned out with the rest of the clutter of capitalist class ideology.

For progressive white Americans to give up the struggle against the ideology of white chauvinism because "it is hopeless" means that they have themselves become victims of racist ideology. The aim of bourgeois propaganda is exactly to create a feeling of hopelessness and that the struggle is over.

No, it is not a matter of hopelessness. It is rather a matter of continuous struggle, a matter of developing ever new approaches, a matter of using the new experiences of people to deepen their understanding of the ideological question.

The purpose of an ideological struggle is to win people for action. The aim of a struggle against the ideology of white supremacy is to win white Americans to join forces with Black Americans to do battle against the practices which that ideology fosters. An ideological struggle in the abstract limps.

It is a many-sided struggle. It is many-sided because the poison of white supremacy penetrates and affects every facet of our lives. It poisons the moral climate. It affects our moral and ethical standards as a nation and as individuals. Thus, it is a moral issue.

Further, the concept of white supremacy rests on a total falsehood; therefore, it is a matter of fighting for scientific truth. It is also a legal and constitutional question because the oppression takes place by sidetracking and trampling on every premise on which the Constitution rests. . . . Hence, it is a matter of basic human rights. (The Roots of Negro Oppression, *Political Affairs*, October 1967, pp 5-6.)

Racism is like all other ideological currents in that the moment you cease struggling, that is precisely the moment it begins to increase and spread.

The recent racist Supreme Court decisions should be taken not only as setbacks, but as a warning that they set the stage for further racist attacks. They are not only setbacks, but they create a new legal go-ahead signal that unleashes all the racist forces.

This understanding should help put an end to any idea that the struggle against racism is over.

The Supreme Court's actions change the nature of the struggle. They change the main field of battle from the courts to the legislative arena and the streets. The moment calls for mass actions. The racist gangs must be corralled.

These new developments also sharpen the struggle in the ideological arena. They call for greater initiatives in the area of changing people's thought patterns. There is a need to put more emphasis on building greater unity, Black-white and workingclass unity. The struggle in the ideological arena against racism will be most effective if it is joined with mass action and mass movements.

The Party

Do racist ideas seep into the Party's ranks? Yes, they do. The struggle against the influences of racism on all levels, including in the Party, must be an ongoing, everyday struggle. That is necessary in general and as a principle. But this inner Party struggle is also necessary for the new members who come into the Party influenced by racism. Without struggle, the seepage of racism cannot be stopped.

Has the Party given up the struggle against racism? No, it has not. Any assertion that the Party has given up or downplays the struggle for equality and against racism is wrong.

There are weaknesses in the Party's work. But in the struggle against racism in general, in the struggle for Black-white unity, in the struggle against white chauvinism, for affirmative action, our Party has stood and continues to stand in advance of any organization on the left. With weaknesses, the workingclass members of our Party, Black and white, are the best, most consistent and effective everyday fighters against racism in the workplace.

Here is just one striking example from a shopworker's conference contribution. In the process of responding to an unjust corporate policy, and without a grievance procedure, a small

multi-racial group in the shop began to meet to plan fightback tactics. Our shop comrade writes,

In the process our shop steward who "didn't want to make waves" decided to resign. A notice for nomination was posted. Our group met several times and agreed to run a young African-American worker who had helped lead our fight. The question of how the majority of workers who are white would vote was raised. Would they vote for the one other candidate, a friend of the foreman, because he is white, or would they vote for the worker who would take on the issue facing us? Some speculated who would vote which way.

Our candidate won approximately two votes to one. Logic and self-interest overcame racist fears and prejudice. It was the only way we would be able to win change.

This is but one case where our comrades in the shop play a leading role in advancing unity in struggle against racism. This was not only a union victory, but a victory over racist ideology.

With all our weaknesses, we are the most advanced force in this struggle. With all our weaknesses, we are the most formidable foe of racism — ideologically, politically and practically in the everyday struggles.

It is on this truthful estimate of our Party's past and present that we can mount the most effective struggle against the flaws and weaknesses that do exist. A distortion of this truth can itself become an obstacle to the elimination of these weaknesses.

Yes, we must truthfully discuss what our weaknesses are without covering up, in order to correct them and advance to a higher level of struggle. But we must do so without distortions or denouncing the Party.

This in no way negates the criticism that we have shortcomings. But it would be a different kind of problem if we had to start from the premise that the Party has given up the struggle against racism.

We have to discuss this because some say the Party has given up the struggle against racism because of its theory and policy which views the working class as the centerpiece against capitalism. To sustain this idea that the Party has given up the struggle against racism, some find ways of downgrading the

working class and even dividing it into separate sections. That does not upgrade the struggle against racism.

I believe that our approach to the working class and to the struggle against racism is a winning ticket. Our approach is that the struggle against racism is at the same time a separate struggle with its own demands and programs, and simultaneously an inseparable part of the class struggle. This is the only road to victory.

Influences in the Party

In the Party, influences and expressions of chauvinism are more indirect and subtle. They are more of an unconscious influence. They often take the form of not being fully aware, of wrong attitudes and of insensitivity as an influence of racist ideology. These influences often appear as silence, as not acting or speaking up or as passivity, rather than overt acts. If there are racists in the Party they should be expelled, period.

We must conclude that we will do better, that we will correct these weaknesses. Any idea, however, that the Party is hopeless or has left the path of struggle is not only a wrong conclusion, but a great disservice to the Party. It is a concept that can only serve the pernicious and divisive aims of the enemy.

Any idea that the Party is hopelessly mired in influences of racism and thus will not grow is also a serious misconception. There is no evidence for such pessimistic conclusions in the history or in the present status of the Party in the struggle against racism.

Another side of this seepage is what I will call — for want of a better word — paternalism. Paternalism is an obstacle to the struggle against the influences of racism. Paternalism covers it up. It is just as damaging to the comrades who practice it as it is to the comrades it is directed against.

On the surface, paternalistic expressions may sound good, may feel pleasant. But they are demeaning, insulting. Paternalism is chauvinism of the worst kind. It assumes that one cannot talk to an African-American comrade on equal grounds. It was

in 1971, in "Racism — The Nation's Most Dangerous Pollutant," that we said,

For the United States, racism is the most formidable obstacle to socialist consciousness. We must clearly see the relationship between these ideological currents.

There cannot be racist workingclass consciousness. There can only be class conscious workers who may be influenced by chauvinism. Only capitalist class consciousness and racism mix.

We cannot have racist anti-imperialist consciousness. We do have anti-imperialists who suffer from chauvinist influences.

There cannot be a successful, long-range struggle for democracy if it does not take on the struggle against the racist ideology of the anti-democratic forces.

There cannot be an anti-monopoly coalition that does not take on the racist ideology, the racist practices of monopoly capitalism.

Any accommodation to enemy ideology is opportunism. Those who cannot see the working class as the major force in the struggle for social progress cannot see the possibilities of the struggle against racism either. Thus, the struggle against opportunism clears the boards for a struggle against racism. Workingclass consciousness is therefore the ideological framework for plowing under all ideological currents designed to support every type of exploitation and oppression.

This holds as true today as it did eighteen years ago. It is the only foundation upon which we can win the struggle against the influences of racism in the Party and in the working class. In the struggle for equality and against racism, the entire history of our Party and its record today demonstrates that we have remained true to these principles.

Are some on the left influenced by the wrong conclusion that the struggle against racism has been won? Yes. Are there some in the Party who are also so influenced? I believe there are. Among other factors, such comrades have difficulty in making the shift to the new kinds of struggles that the new racist offensive calls for.

Again, notwithstanding our weaknesses, no other organization, group or individual in our country can match our Party's

illustrious record in this struggle. Is this boasting? Or, is it the truth? It is both.

Other forms of chauvinism

There are other ideological currents that, in one way or another, are related to racism.

Chauvinism against Mexican Americans is a growing disease. It is most widespread and intense in states where the Mexican-American population is growing fastest, as in California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. It is most prevalent in these states, but it is also nationwide.

While it is based on racism and is racist, chauvinism against Mexican Americans has a specifically anti-Mexican American essence. It is used by big business to create an economic gap. And that gap keeps widening and deepening, especially in the agricultural areas. Like racism, it is an instrument of superprofits.

Does this chauvinism affect the thought patterns of the American people? Yes, it does. It creates disunity among workers in industry and in trade unions. It breeds discrimination against Mexican Americans in housing and education, in the medical system, and in culture.

Does this chauvinism infiltrate the ranks of the left and our Party? Yes, it does. This influence has grown because we have not conducted a consistent struggle against it. There is an insensitivity to its effects in the Party. And it has a divisive effect in the ranks of some sections of our Party.

In relations between African Americans and Mexican Americans and white Americans, the tensions between them in areas like Los Angeles are reflected on the left and in the Party. This cuts down on our Party's ability to make its full contribution in the struggle against racism and chauvinism, and for the unity of all peoples.

What is needed is a more organized ideological struggle against racism and ethnic chauvinism. We must find ways to prevent the enemy from using these differences.

In addition to African Americans and Mexican Americans, there are other nationalities who suffer discrimination and oppression because of their nationality.

At the bottom of the economic ladder are the American Indian peoples. The majority of these peoples are still forced to live on reservations, in slum conditions, where unemployment is up to 60 percent.

U.S. government policy toward American Indians is genocidal. The reservation system is akin to slavery in South Africa. The mortality rate for American Indians is 778 per 100,000 — 1.4 times the rate for all U.S. citizens. And 37 percent of all deaths of American Indians are among those less than 45 years old; among all U.S. citizens it is 12 percent.

Neither U.S. capitalist democracy nor the American dream have ever touched the lives of the American Indian peoples. Anti-Indian chauvinism started with the Pilgrims. Right from the beginning, anti-Indian chauvinism has been and continues to be a strong current in bourgeois ideology. Does it affect other Americans? Yes, it does. Because of this the struggle for American-Indian equality does not get the support needed to mount an effective struggle against this chauvinism.

Not too far behind on the economic ladder are the Puerto Rican people. Their economic status and the chauvinism practiced against them in the United States is related to the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

Because of the economic gap, they are the victims of discrimination in housing, education, medical care and culture. Chauvinism against Puerto Ricans is a feature of the overall ideology of American capitalism.

Does chauvinism toward Puerto Rican people influence the thinking patterns of the American people? Yes, it does. Does it infiltrate into the ranks of the left and the Party? Yes, it does. We have not done enough to fight against it.

In our country there are large numbers of Asian-Pacific Americans and peoples from Central America and the Caribbean, peoples from the Arab countries and the Middle East, as well as the native peoples of Alaska who suffer from racist discrimination and chauvinistic attitudes.

Jewish Americans have largely become assimilated in the economy, in culture and education. The restrictions in housing have largely disappeared. But anti-Semitism continues as a live current in the bourgeois ideological power line.

Tactics of struggle

Capitalist ideologues carry on a relentless campaign to convince the American people that all victims of racism and chauvinism are inferior and backward. They work to create an overall atmosphere of tensions, distrust and division between all the sectors of the people.

This calls for tactics of struggle against racism and chauvinism as they affect each section of the people. But it also calls for tactics of unity of all the victims — for example in the trade union movement and in election campaigns.

And it calls for a broad people's democratic movement for the elimination of every form of this pollution. This should include a broad educational and cultural campaign. I believe the people of the United States are ready for such a campaign, people united against all forms of racism and chauvinism.

This would include new laws, with teeth, against all forms of racist practices:

- Laws that will guarantee equality in education;
- Laws for affirmative action;
- Laws that place top priority on rebuilding the inner cities with affordable housing.

Women

Half the working class of our nation are discriminated against because they are women. The economic wage gap is 40 to 60 percent. The corporate capitalist ideology supporting and sustaining the policies of discrimination is male supremacy, including the Hitlerian concept that a woman's place is in the home.

The argument goes: women are not the main breadwinners. As workers whose wages are only a supplement to their husbands' income, it is not necessary to pay them full, equal wages.

The Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action are a serious setback to the cause of women's equality. And the latest Supreme Court decision on abortion rights again clearly shows the anti-woman ideology of our capitalist society. Women workers still have to fight for equality in the workplace and in society at large.

The ideology that sustains the concept of inferiority, and thus inequality, of women has always been an element of U.S. capitalist ideology. The other side of the inferiority concept is the male supremacy hoax. Bourgeois ideology promotes the "macho male" superiority image. It is one of the factors resulting in violence against women at home and on the streets.

Does bourgeois, male supremacist ideology have effects in our Party? Yes, it does. In this area as well there is insensitivity. We can do much more in initiating and supporting struggles for women's equality.

There are some in the Party who believe that the struggle for the full equality of women should be left to the women. Some think that if women are in leading positions it must be because of factors other than their political, organizational and ideological attributes. This is expressed in the way these comrades relate to women comrades.

Great power chauvinism

To the above we must add the ideology of great power chauvinism — the arrogance of a Bush who proclaims the right to dictate, to scold, to teach and lecture to the world. It is the arrogant conviction that the United States is the pre-ordained protector of human rights, the defender of democracy. It is the presumption that, because the banks make loans to Third World countries, they have the right to dictate their internal, domestic policies. Great power chauvinism is imperialist arrogance.

Racism and chauvinism are directly related to exploitation and oppression, to domination, to corporate profits. There are no positive aspects to great power chauvinism. It is the ideological side of aggression and oppression. It is the ideology of an oppressor.

Nationalism

Of course there are also ideological currents among the oppressed. One such current is nationalism.

In countries where there is a capitalist class, nationalism expresses the ideas of that class. Where there is a small or no capi-

talist class, nationalism takes a petty bourgeois form.

In most cases, nationalism plays a positive role. It serves as a unifier and mobilizer in the struggle for equality.

Nationalism plays an important role in the struggles for national liberation. Especially since World War II, nationalism and national liberation have been in a single orbit. But after liberation, the capitalist elements in many of the countries move into another orbit, away from a progressive or socialist path. Nationalism then becomes their ideological base.

In many of these cases around the world, nationalism no longer plays a positive role. In these cases, especially where nationalists and some of the more backward religious groups join forces, this becomes the main obstacle on the path of socialist or even bourgeois democratic development.

In the United States, petty bourgeois nationalism has played and still does play a positive role in the struggle against racism and ethnic chauvinism. It has stimulated the struggles against racial and national oppression.

By and large the oppressed peoples accept only the positive side, which includes national culture. They do not accept nationalism when it is an obstacle to people's unity. In fact, most oppressed peoples in the United States reject any kind of nationalism that is divisive. The African-American community, for example, continues to move away from any kind of nationalism that divides.

However, there are forces who use nationalism for negative purposes. In fact, they dismiss and downgrade the struggle against racism and chauvinism. They reject the concept of the relationship between the class struggle and the struggle against racism. Many develop anti-workingclass ideas. They belittle and discredit the achievements in the struggle against racism, and the role of the working class in that struggle.

Does petty bourgeois nationalism have an effect on left forces and even in the ranks of our Party? Yes, it does. One of the reasons it does is that we have not dealt with this problem for some time. It is a weakness of the Party that we have not consistently challenged and struggled against this negative ideological current.

As one result of this conference, we must resolve that our Party and its leadership will give more consistent attention to

the struggle against racism and ethnic chauvinism, and to the struggle for the equality of women. We must resolve to burn out any idea that racism is a thing of the past. To raise the struggle to a higher level we must develop a system of checkup on all levels of the Party.

Racism and chauvinism are a major part of bourgeois ideology. It is a factor in every area of life. This places a heavy responsibility on our Party. It is not an easy task. It is difficult, but hopeless it is not.

To accompany the slogan of a nuclear-free world, we in the United States should coin the slogan and initiate a struggle for a world free of racism and chauvinism of any kind.

5

The Party's Ideological Work

The pre-conference discussion period has been very lively. Scores of articles and letters were received. Most of the articles were constructive and balanced.

Most of the articles express an honest assessment of our Party's ideological work. Most of them discuss objective developments as a background for discussing weaknesses as they relate to new events. In this framework the criticisms are thoughtful, healthy and constructive. Most of the material is probing.

There are some interesting patterns in the articles and letters. Most of the healthy, constructive articles are critical. But they are also self-critical.

However, some articles contain no self-criticism. Somehow or other the weaknesses raised in such articles about the Party have no relationship or even reference to their own work. Criticism that includes self-criticism always carries more clout.

Not all the discussion pieces are ideological. Some raise organizational and structural questions about the inner life of the Party. Many of these criticisms are justified and will be helpful in advancing the work of the Party.

Some articles reflect some political and ideological weaknesses. Some criticisms are framed in invective. That is not helpful.

It was our intention to try to keep the discussion focused on ideological questions. But because other questions have been raised, we have to respond to them.

On openness and democracy

Some of the articles are critical about not having all the facts about the Party. Some ask where the glasnost is in our Party.

When making such comparisons, I think it is elementary to keep in mind that glasnost in the Soviet Union consists of mea-

asures taken by a party that is in power. Because of this, the Soviet comrades have correctly warned that "perestroika and glasnost are not for export."

For example, Comrade Yakovlev said, "That is precisely why perestroika is not a product to be exported — copying it mechanically will serve no useful purpose." And Comrade Gorbachev has said about criticism, "Criticism can be a very effective lever for renewal, but only when it is based on full truth. There is no way any bias, lopsidedness or inaccuracy in criticism can benefit reconstruction."

There are lessons we can draw from the Soviet comrades' experiences. But they cannot be applied mechanically. We have to deal with our Party's inner life in the framework of our own political reality. This includes questions about inner democracy and openness.

One older comrade wrote, "We are an open legal political organization with the same rights as others. We should act like that." That sounds nice, but it is a misleading statement. Our relationships with mass movements and mass leaders must, of necessity, be shaped by the political atmosphere in our country. And while the political atmosphere has improved — and I believe we have responded to it — the fact is that it has not yet reached the point where the Party can have public and open relationships without regard for how the people and organizations we work with respond. Many are not yet ready to work with Communists who are public.

Some comrades who wrote about the lack of openness of the Party signed their articles with a phony name for security reasons. And said so. But they obviously thought only they are in a situation that necessitated this.

I think everyone is aware that some of our good mass workers are not here with us at this conference. Most of them wanted to be here, but the Party said it was not wise. Who are these comrades? Officers of trade union locals, leaders in important united front mass movements, Communists who have been elected to public office in the past year. Yes, elected public officials. Some are here, others are not.

Let me say here that this breakthrough in the election of Communists to public office is an important yardstick by which we should measure the nature of the Party's influence and mass

work, as well as the correctness of our electoral tactics. It is a very important beginning.

There are others who cannot appear publicly as members of our Party, such as some rank-and-file leaders, leaders in neighborhood organizations, members of the clergy, comrades who work in governmental agencies. And many of our members in shops, offices, schools and other professionals simply cannot function publicly as Communists — yet.

We always encourage comrades who can to function publicly. But the truth is that the majority of our members cannot yet function publicly. That is simply the reality in our country. This creates many problems, including that the Party membership cannot always know the full scope of the Party's work.

So when some make criticisms about the lack of full knowledge of the Party's work, they should do so by debating whether they think the political atmosphere is such that it is possible to function so publicly.

The problem is not that our comrades do not want to be public, to function more openly as Communists. It is the non-Party people who work with us who place limitations on our openness. Most new members ask: how public will my work as a Communist be? To say that we have "legal rights," that there are no laws against being a member of the Communist Party, does not answer the question.

Why don't we grow faster?

One of the questions raised in a number of articles is why the Party does not grow faster. First of all, statements that the Party is not growing at all are simply untrue. We are recruiting some members all the time. Some states and districts more, some less. We cannot be satisfied with the rate of recruiting — we have discussed this many times.

Another article claims that all the other left groups are growing except the Communist Party. How wrong can one be? The truth is just the opposite. For the last several years, all the other left groups and organizations have been in a continuing decline. We are not satisfied with our growth. But to say we have not grown at all is a falsehood. One of the reasons the oth-

er left groups are not growing is that there has been a new wave of splitting in most of them.

There are many reasons for the slowness in our growth. Whether justified or not, fear is still a factor; fear left over from the McCarthyite terror, fear of the FBI. The truth is that the FBI continues to call and try to visit comrades. They call non-Party people, who in one way or another have been in touch with the Party. There is still fear in the mass production industries. And of course, the truth is that the corporations still use anti-communism to intimidate workers.

When discussing Party growth, we must place this objective reality into the equation. Fear is still very much a political fact of life. Even in the ranks of class conscious workers, fear is the reason why many do not join the Party. Many are happy to work with Communists, but are not ready to become members of the Communist Party. Therefore our influence grows much faster than our membership.

The main base for Party growth is through the clubs. Where clubs are involved in the struggles in the shops and neighborhoods they are more likely to recruit. Where clubs have some public presence and inject the Communist plus into their work they are more likely to recruit.

And we have to keep the objective developments always in mind. During periods of ebb in social and political developments, recruiting slows down.

From this conference we are going to launch a well-organized Party building drive in the name of Comrade Henry Winston. It will be a test for the Party, for each club and for all of us. After the drive, every one of us should sit down and write a memo on the subject, "how I recruited," or "why I did not recruit."

Since the Party's Milwaukee conference in 1981, we have been probing, trying to think through how much of the slowness in growth comes from how we work. The truth is that much of it can be attributed to how we function.

The Party's influence

Some of the criticism shows a lack of knowledge about the Party's work. This is understandable. However, there are some

who should know better, but who choose to ignore the truth and for whatever reason engage in a destructive kind of criticism.

Let me refer to one article as an example of this kind of criticism. The article charges,

There is also among us an inflated estimate of the Party's influence. Thus, the appearance of Party leaders on the Phil Donahue Show was cited as evidence that the Party speaks to millions. Such self-deception is harmful.

Self-deception is a serious charge; it is close to the charge of lying. This falsification of the Party's influence is also a way to deny that the Party is a plus factor in people's struggles. The writer seems non-plussed with the plus factor!

However, the statement itself is self-deception. It is false. The truth is that we are able to, and do, speak to millions. It is one of the important breakthroughs of the last few years. The Donahue show alone reached millions. But the Donahue Show was just one of the hundreds of TV and radio shows our comrades have appeared on and are appearing on regularly. Not a single week goes by that we do not appear on talk shows and do interviews. I did some of that in Chicago yesterday.

Most of the shows have taken place from the national office, but during the past year especially, more and more leading comrades in some states are appearing on radio and TV shows, and their articles and letters are appearing in mainstream newspapers, magazines and journals.

Among other such reports, last week a comrade from Utah wrote,

The station turned over the program to us, let us be our own host and present our own program . . . The switchboard (according to management) "lighted up like a Christmas tree," the biggest response for any program. On another station, one of our comrades was rebaited and another talk show host, angry at the rebaiting, offered his program to this comrade. The interview came off good.

It has become regular practice in the mass media that whenever an important event takes place, in the world or domestical-

ly, of all the organizations on the left our Party gets the calls for our opinions and comments.

For example, during the three weeks of the upheaval in China we appeared on over 500 radio and TV outlets, live and taped, some of which were network and cable stations. The listening audience is estimated to be in the 60 million range.

During the last six months alone, eleven major newspapers have carried special, rather good two-page feature articles on the Party; dozens carried two- or three-column articles. The total circulation of these papers is in the millions. The theme of these articles is, "The Communist Party makes a comeback."

Besides those of us who are known as Communists, we have a growing number of Party members who are not publicly known but who appear on radio, TV and in print.

In many cities and states, the letters to the editor writing by our comrades has become a regular part of their work. Some have been asked to write regular columns. Some clubs have worked out a system of letter writing. Again, this is reaching millions.

Our Party has issued a number of very good pamphlets, leaflets and article reprints, some in the hundreds of thousands. They can be better, and we should do more.

Whenever Party leaders speak at colleges and universities, they draw some of the biggest crowds. Comrade Angela Davis is a mass media celebrity.

And of course we have the *People's Daily World*, *Political Affairs* and *Jewish Affairs*. With special editions, the total circulation is in the hundreds of thousands.

The truth is that our Party has made an important breakthrough and that we do speak to millions of Americans. This is a new experience.

This cannot be called anything but unprecedented openness and mass work. Today there is no other form that enables us to reach thousands and millions at once. And we are breaking through and mastering the art of speaking to millions. This breakthrough did not come about without a struggle. We had to fight for it. And it did not take place overnight. With better organization, we could speak to additional millions.

Is this not something we should be positive about? Even proud of and excited about?

There is no other organization on the left today that gets the coverage we do. In fact, a representative of the Democratic Socialists of America appeared with us on two national TV shows only because we convinced the producers to invite them.

The question of whether the Party adds a plus factor to people's struggles and movements seems elementary to me. In fact, this is what the Party is all about. We inject a Marxist-Leninist, class struggle approach when we work in mass movements. I have difficulty in understanding why any member of the Party would want to denigrate and even heap scorn on such positive contributions to the people's struggles and mass movements. We cannot be satisfied, but some good work is being done.

Young Communist League

Here I want to say a few things about the work of the Young Communist League. The same article that criticized the Party for its "inflated estimate" of our media work, did the same thing in relation to the YCL. The writer picked out the words on the cover of the August 1988 issue of *Political Affairs*, "The Young Communist League, Leading the Liberation Generation," and used it as a jumping-off point to criticize the estimate of the YCL. The front cover headline was not the title of any of the articles in the issue.

If the writer was serious he would have read the four articles in that issue and a later one in the March issue which would have given him cause to pause. The truth is that the YCL has made remarkable progress in the last years. It has grown in membership. But even more important is the role and contributions it is making in the broad movements of the young generation.

It has been a long time since the YCL has had such solid working relationships with the broadest and biggest national youth and student organizations. Quite a few of these organizations were represented by their leadership at the YCL's first national conference this year. And most recently, these relationships include young socialists.

We can be proud of the leading role the YCL is playing in the struggles against racism on college campuses across the country. A number of our young comrades have been elected to

leading bodies of student governments and student organizations.

Just recently, in spite of some very difficult problems, the YCL was able to bring together a broad cross-section of youth into a movement and a delegation of 100 American young people to the 13th World Youth Festival in North Korea.

Should we not point out and focus on these important achievements which the League can build on, rather than focus on the title of an article? Again, it is difficult to understand why anyone would want to ignore these achievements and focus on an article's title.

Optimism and confidence

This is not the first time we have been accused of being overly optimistic. Some groups on the left, including the Line of March and some Trotskyite groups, have written that our Party has a policy of "official optimism." In a sense, I think this is true. We do focus on achievements and positive developments for the purpose of building on them. A movement cannot build on negatives alone. To those who want to denigrate our achievements, this must seem like "official optimism."

Perhaps these left groups resent the fact that we are the most recognized and respected organization on the left and thus have reason to be optimistic and confident.

Are we overly optimistic? Sometimes we may be. But I think by and large our optimism is based on the reality of the moment. Optimism and confidence, when they are based on reality, become a source of mobilization and lead to action. Pessimism leads to inaction and even paralysis.

Those who would challenge the level and quality of our work should do so on the basis of challenging our estimates of the *objective* developments and our achievements in that framework.

If the aim of criticism is to be effective and unifying, it must be based on the truth. One must not use partial truths and untruths, or twist the truth to make a point. And criticism should present some practical alternatives in the areas being criticized. Sweeping generalizations, without reference to examples from life, may sound impressive, even profound and poetic, but they

are anything but helpful in correcting weaknesses.

One should not use criticism of the Party, of other Party members or leaders as a way of hiding one's own weaknesses.

How to criticize

To be constructive and beneficial to the Party, criticisms of the Party's work, its inner life, its structure, method and style as well as its assessments and program, must not be abstract and sweeping. They should be concrete, with examples.

The work of the Party cannot be separated from its objective environment, the surroundings in which it must function every day. A fair estimate should deal with how the Party responds to objective reality.

For example, our trade union work and industrial concentration policy must not be measured abstractly, but in relation to what mass thought patterns are, what workers are ready to do at this point in time. We have to take into consideration that when the objective situation and mass thought patterns change, the work of the Party must change accordingly. There are and will be ebbs and flows in objective developments. And, in one way or another, they will affect the work of the Party.

The same applies to our work in the struggle against racism. A fair critique must measure our work against the backdrop of the objective scene and the nature and status of the movements and struggles of the moment, of how people are responding to objective developments.

The challenge is how our Party can make its maximum contribution — take actions and initiatives — in an ebb or flow period, or in a period of more basic and permanent changes. The same applies to the struggles for peace, women's equality, youth and so on.

We cannot create movements and struggles for change in a void. We must consider the political environment and atmosphere at the moment we are considering our tactics. We can and do, however, influence and ride the crest of the waves of the existing movements and struggles.

If we conclude that mass thought patterns are ripe for struggle and we do not respond, this should become the basis for a critical examination. Such an examination should include the

specific things the Party did or did not do. It must be conducted on the basis of a careful appraisal of the facts, of the objective situation. Such criticism can be helpful and lead to corrections and change.

Criticisms of the Party must be made in the context of what the masses are ready to do, what kind of struggles they are ready for. We must keep adjusting and changing tactics to coincide with the ebbs and flows. When criticizing the Party, the ebbs and flows must be a part of the assessment.

In some of the pre-conference articles, there are criticisms based on the concept that all the Party has to do is call for action and if there is little or no response by movements and people, then the Party is in a crisis. Without a scientific critique based on the study of reality, such criticism leads to frustration, pessimism and paralysis. It leads to a conclusion that the Party is in crisis.

Inner Party democracy

Some discussion articles raise criticisms about bureaucracy and a lack of democracy in the Party. Much of this criticism is correct and helpful. Some of the same criticisms were made in my last report to the National Committee six months ago.

For example, in that report we said that while it was not possible in past periods to consult the clubs directly by mail, in the present legal and political atmosphere it is possible. We said that we have been too slow in making this change. We gave an example on how we handled the question of whether our Party would field a presidential candidate. "There was not enough discussion or consultation. This was an important question. And it was possible to consult the clubs to see what they thought of it, but we did not."

We have taken some additional steps to involve leaders and members in the work of the national Party organization. For the last four years each club and each member of the National Committee and National Council have all received a letter before every meeting asking for their input into preparations for political reports to meetings of national bodies. These were wide open invitations for input on any question.

There has been a good response, and this has been helpful

in presenting comprehensive, collective, rounded reports. However, there are too many comrades now complaining about a lack of democracy who have not responded to this collective effort.

It is a small thing, but for a number of years the phone in the national office, with a special phone number, has been kept open on Wednesday nights so that anyone can call to raise anything they have on their minds. That is, keeping in mind that most likely our phones are tapped. This method of communication is important especially because it provides an opportunity for comrades who work days. In these past weeks, a number of workingclass comrades have used the Wednesday night opportunity to call about this conference.

The pages of the *People's Daily World*, *Political Affairs*, *Jewish Affairs* and the *Party Builder* are always open to members and leaders of our Party. There are only a few restrictions, which I think you will agree are necessary. Our Party publications will not print anything with racist, anti-workingclass content. And they will not publish open slander of the Party.

About our press — articles from three clubs in one way or another raised the question of doing away with the *People's Daily World* because it takes "too much effort, money and time." And, as one article said, "We don't have the time to visit the contacts we make with the paper anyway."

To do away with the *People's Daily World* would be the first step in liquidating the Party. I don't see an alternative to our press — or our Party. Here again, the influence of the *People's Daily World* is much greater than its subscriptions alone.

Because I have been forced to defend the Party against what we believe are unjustified criticisms, I have not been able to give as much attention as I would like to the criticisms that are justified. Generally, we do have a critical attitude about our work. But it is a shortcoming that the bulk of the criticism we in the leadership make about our own work does not reach the membership.

In addition to the example I gave from the last National Committee report, during the period since our last national convention we have had three full-day meetings to take a critical look at our work, as individuals and as collectives. In the future, we must find ways of letting the membership know about these

discussions and the measures we take to improve our work.

Democratic centralism

Some clubs and comrades have raised questions about our practice of democratic centralism. Some have suggested that we do away with it. As with most questions, it is how the system is applied that proves whether it is a good structure.

There are weaknesses in how we use this important part of our Party structure. However, I believe that the concept and the structure of democratic centralism is correct and necessary.

Some have suggested the idea that, while we maintain majority rule, we include the right of the minority to continue fighting for its position after there has been a collective discussion and a decision has been made.

I believe an organization like ours must have a structure making it possible to end the discussion period after a position has been reached as democratically as possible. I believe our Party Constitution states it quite well:

The Central Committee and the State and District Committees shall encourage the widest discussion by the membership on all questions of theory and general line of Party policy. They shall provide organs to facilitate such discussions provided that in the opinion of the Central Committee such discussions do not hinder or impede the execution of Party policy and decisions or weaken the unity of the Party in action. (Pages 22-23.)

A political party, especially a revolutionary party, cannot become an endless debating society. Ours is a party of action. Once we reach a decision on policy, then it is necessary to act on it as soon as possible.

In fact, some say we are too liberal about the rights of members with minority positions. For example, while we may be critical of anyone who continues to campaign for his or her position after the majority decision is reached, we do not take any kind of action against such comrades. Maybe the Party should.

There are comrades who disagree with a majority decision or opinion and do not necessarily continue to debate openly, but who do not actively fight for it in life. This is not keeping faith

with democratic centralism. But we never call anyone to task for it. Maybe the Party should.

Thus in many ways we have applied democratic centralism rather flexibly. I am for the most democratic interpretation of all Party rules. But there are limits because there is often a thin dividing line between democracy and anarchy. However, we can take another look at it during the next convention of our Party.

I believe there are those who try to cover up their political and ideological differences behind the facade of raising general questions about how our Party carries out democratic centralism. Where there are criticisms they should be concrete and give suggestions for change. I'm sure we can make improvements.

There are some elementary precepts about how a workingclass organization like the Party must function. The structure of our Party is based on the concept that it is democratic, that the avenues of expression are open to the members. The structure provides for a majority vote on policies and the election of leadership.

The democratic process comes together at a national convention. The convention decides on policy and program, and elects the leading bodies. The leadership has specific responsibilities and tasks. It is within that structure that the Party functions.

Factionalism

During the pre-conference preparation and discussion period, I am sorry to say that factionalism has raised its ugly head. In some clubs and even in a state Party organization, it has become a serious obstacle to the functioning of the Party.

Therefore, any meeting that is called outside of the Party structure; any meeting that the leading bodies are unaware of; any attempt to call meetings with the purpose of overruling the official, elected bodies of the Party; any meeting outside of the Party structure called for the purpose of undermining and attacking the elected leaders of the Party is factional.

Factionalism seems to be a recurring disease. It is like a ten-year itch.

In 1969, at the Party's national convention, Comrade Winston said,

Factionalism is usually the work of the enemy from within. Factionalism is usually coordinated with outside repressive measures to weaken the Party, to undermine the Party, to destroy it.

The fight against factionalism is a fight against alien concepts and alien practices within the Party. Our Party grows stronger as it forges the struggle against factionalism. But factionalism often develops under the cover of "free discussion," whereas in reality it makes impossible free discussion within the Party.

Comrades, factionalism is a most destructive force. It is incompatible with membership in our Party.

Winnie was right then. And he is right today.

Evidently it was also a problem in Lenin's days. His advice was,

In the practical struggle against factionalism every organization of the Party must take strict measures to prevent all factional actions.

Criticism of the Party's shortcomings, which is absolutely necessary, must be conducted in such a way that every practical proposal shall be submitted immediately, without any delay, in the most precise form possible, for consideration and decision, to the leading local and central bodies of the Party.

Moreover, every critic must see to it that the form of his or her criticism takes account of the position of the Party, surrounded as it is by a ring of enemies.

Factionalism is the most effective tool of the enemy and the infiltrators from some of the left groups. As we all know, it is the *policy* of some left groups to infiltrate the Party and destroy its unity from the inside. Not everyone joins the Party to build it. Some are organizers of factions within.

Among the most damaging aspects of factionalism is that honest, healthy comrades get caught up in it. And I feel I have to apologize to the great majority of you here — in fact to the 95 percent of you who, because of the factional 5 percent, have to be subjected to these remarks and who in no way are involved in these kinds of shenanigans.

In life and in the Party we all have some variations and shades of opinion on many questions. We all have complaints and concerns. And most of the complaints have some basis in reality. I am for the widest possible discussion. The question, however, is *how* we raise them and where we discuss them, because it is always these differences among us that the enemy also focuses on.

We all have the right to raise questions and criticisms. And I think the Party does provide the opportunity and atmosphere in which to raise questions. If any of you feel you do not have this right, there are ways of raising that also. Raise the questions and criticisms. But do it through Party channels, using guidelines for healthy criticism that conclude with suggestions for correction. You must do this because unity is the most precious and critical feature of our Party.

Do not permit anyone, whether well-meaning or not, to draw you into non-Party, anti-Party, or any kind of factional channels. Because once you are drawn into a factional trap it is very difficult to withdraw from it. You develop friendships and relationships on a factional basis. The interests, aims and activities of the faction become more important than the interests of the Party.

More than anything, factionalism saps the strength of the Party. The enemy tactic within the Party is to keep the Party in constant turmoil, to keep it embroiled in a never-ending debate, especially around internal questions or abstract pinhead formulations. The enemy tactic is to keep raising questions and spreading rumors about the leadership, to exaggerate their weaknesses and raise questions about their abilities.

You have a right to raise your criticisms about Party leaders. That is your right, in fact your duty. But do it responsibly and constructively. Most of us will not like it — no one likes criticism — but we are mature enough to take it.

When criticizing the Party or Party leaders, or when listening to criticism by others, we should all keep in mind one idea — will it help or harm the Party, is it constructive or destructive? If you conclude that it's not going to help the Party, give it a second thought.

Throughout the years, we have taken steps to create a more efficient and more democratic structure and, even more impor-

tant, a better atmosphere in which criticism and self-criticism can take place. These measures make it more difficult for factional groups and individuals to do their wrecking work, and make it easier for the majority to raise their concerns and criticisms and for the Party to respond.

In all the discussion articles, however, there are very few concrete proposals as to how we can be more democratic. Any new ideas on how to improve our democratic methods and structure are more than welcome.

We have taken some steps in that direction. The Trade Union Commission has been restructured on the basis of regional committees. This brings our work closer to the rank and file. It involves more of the comrades who are involved directly in trade union and shop work.

We are now doing the same thing regarding the work of the national Party leadership. The purpose is to give more comrades an opportunity to be a part of the national leadership. The national leadership of the YCL has been restructured to make it more democratic. But we can do more.

A word about new thinking in our Party. There are no obstacles to new thinking, to any kind of new thinking. The Party takes all new ideas seriously. But none of us should think that all of our ideas will necessarily be adopted. Many of my new ideas go into the wastebasket.

Do we have problems in relation to bureaucratic ways of doing things? Yes, we do. We have discussed this many times, both privately and publicly. There is some improvement, but the problem keeps reappearing. Cutting democratic corners very often is a bureaucratic way of doing things.

Again, what is most helpful is when you come up against bureaucratic behavior, or any wrongdoing by Party leaders, to raise it in the Party. Whispering about it does not help. The enemy's ears are much more attuned to whispers than are Communist ears.

There are many things about our work that need improvement. But whatever problems there are can be corrected through collective effort, working together.

The whole truth

For as long as I can remember I have heard or read statements like, "the Party does not have a monopoly on the truth." It appears again in some of the pre-conference material. What I have not seen or heard is where the Party claims that it has the whole truth.

Of course, scientifically speaking, no one ever has the whole truth. Truth is an elusive, ever-changing, developing phenomenon. One can never have the whole truth at a given moment. The moment you think you do, it develops into a different truth.

Lenin was always very critical of people who used this fact of science to say the Bolsheviks had no hold on the truth. And it seems that some comrades have adopted the ways of the old doubters, the so-called agnostics. They say that if the Party does not have the "total truth" then we have no truth. One comrade said we should not say we are "correct" or that we have "a correct line" or "a correct analysis" because that means others have an "incorrect line and are subject to scorn and derision."

There is no need for scorn, but the only way to separate what is correct from what is incorrect is to say so. One article claimed that differing ideas in the Party are "disdainfully considered incorrect." The writer feels that we should not put our positions, our truth, into "nicely wrapped packages." I am for much better political wrapping for our ideas.

Truth is a weapon in the class struggle, on the side of workers. We should continue to develop and spread the truth as we collectively see it. If at times we feel we have a bigger share of the truth, it is because we come to it through application of our science and years of experience in struggle as a workingclass party. In that case, the truthful thing to do is to share it with the world.

My remarks in defending the truth about our Party should not be taken to mean we have no weaknesses and shortcomings. We have weaknesses and we make mistakes. If you read the reports made to our National Committee meetings, to National Board meetings and national conventions, you will see

that most of them are very much concerned with our weaknesses.

I have been thinking about why at this time there has been more than the usual amount of criticism. Some comrades relate it to glasnost in the Soviet Union. If that is true, then those comrades have been under the impression that in the past, before glasnost, they were not allowed to speak out in our Party. If that is so, then I would be interested in knowing concretely what there has been about our Party that gave them that idea. Then we could do more to correct the shortcomings.

6

Conclusion

From the beginning we said that ideology is not memorizing formulas. It is a way of thinking, a way of responding, a way of reacting almost reflexively. It is the accumulated rich essence of our theory, philosophy and history, our science of Marxism-Leninism and our experiences in the class struggle.

Our ideology is not stale or lifeless. In the ways of ideology, it reflects and responds to changes in the class struggle.

We can deepen our ideological heritage through continuing, probing study of our science. To help us set up a permanent, systematic program, we are establishing an Ideological Commission of the Communist Party. We are going to put much greater emphasis on ideology in our schools, classes and meetings.

The *People's Daily World and Political Affairs* will make room for more articles on ideological questions.

As a follow-up to this conference, each state and district should plan to hold an ideological conference. Each club should plan a special ideological discussion conference twice a year.

The National Committee has elected a committee that will review our Party Program, with an eye to revising it in accordance with the new objective and subjective developments, world and domestic, with emphasis on ideological questions.

At the risk of being accused of "official optimism," let me state a basic truth.

Like Humpty-Dumpty in the children's verse, capitalism will have a great fall, and not all the king's horses and all the king's men — nor capitalist ideology or Wall Street thugs — will ever put capitalism back on history's stage again.

The working class will fulfill its mandate from history: to eliminate forever the last of the big exploiters, the capitalist class.

Comrade W.E.B. DuBois, whose far-reaching vision en-

abled him to see many things ahead of his time, also foresaw the demise of capitalism and the advent of a communist world.

In his letter applying for membership in the Communist Party USA almost 30 years ago, Comrade DuBois prophetically wrote,

Today I have reached a firm conclusion: capitalism can not reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction. No universal selfishness can bring social good to all.

Communism — the effort to give all men what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute — this is the only way of human life. It is a difficult and hard end to reach. It has and will make mistakes. But today it marches triumphantly on in education, science, in home and food, with increased freedom of thought and deliverance from dogma. In the end communism will triumph.

I want to help bring that day. The path of the American Communist Party is clear: it will provide the United States with a real third party and thus restore democracy to this land.

In the Communist Party's response to Dr. DuBois, we proudly and enthusiastically welcomed him:

I read your letter to our National Board where it was greeted with the highest enthusiasm and responded to with many heartfelt testimonials to the titanic labors which you have performed over a glorious span of 60 years of dedicated service and leadership in the cause of human progress, peace, science and culture.

Dear Dr. DuBois, welcome into the membership of our Party! The title of Party member is an honorable and worthy title, worn with pride by the most dedicated and far-seeing, the best sons and daughters of the workers and peoples of all lands in the first ranks of the struggle for mankind's happy future.

It is to that beautiful expression by Dr. DuBois, of full confidence in the people, in the working class, in our Party and in the lofty future of communism, that we dedicate this Ideological Conference.

7

Summary Remarks

This has been a wonderful, history-making, landmark conference. History will record this conference as a "conference of unity." It brought our Party together ideologically. Because we have laid the basis for unity on a more solid foundation, a higher level of unity will be the most lasting result of this conference. We have laid the basis for a better Party atmosphere. What we must now do is keep this unity strong and raise it to even greater heights. Let us all work on this.

The enthusiasm and excitement of the 525 delegates and guests, from across the country, representing our multi-racial, multinational, male-female, young and older workers, trade unionists, professionals, community activists and leaders, was a statement of the greatness and strength of our Party. There were many new comrades at the conference who left with a new image of the Party.

Calling this conference was itself based on new thinking. Holding the conference was part of the process of broadening and deepening democracy in our Party. The conference was a defense of the Party, of Marxism-Leninism, of socialism. It was a back-to-basics conference, but it also broke new ideological ground on many new questions and developments.

Comrades were so stimulated ideologically that delegates and guests bought over \$2,000 in Marxist-Leninist literature for further study. The exhibits and displays of Party history, the slogans and cultural events, as well as the greetings we received from fraternal parties around the world, all added a rich dimension to the conference. The image, the physical presence of the breadth and scope of our Party, made a tremendous impression.

The conference was a weigh station for ideological retreading, for renewal and for reinforcing our revolutionary optimism about our class, about socialism and our Party. It was an exhibition of the strength of our will, our commitment and capability.

The conference was a booster shot for the Party. It renewed confidence in the class struggle and working class, and in the ability of our Party to play its leading role.

It has been a great, stimulating and rich learning experience for all of us. As a result, we are more ideologically mature. We have renewed confidence that we can identify and grapple with questions with more clarity and objectivity. We will be better able to collectively resolve whatever differences there are. How we deal with differences and even shades of differences is sometimes more important than the differences themselves.

We should see this conference as the beginning of a new period of ideological and political growth. Ideology will take its front rank place in our Party's work and become a more powerful weapon for good, new thinking in our Party. We must continue the process in many ways.

We need a collective assessment of the conference in order to have a balanced estimate and focus for our future work. This will be a process that will take place in the coming regional schools, and in state/district and club follow-up ideological conferences.

Excerpts from the keynote, workshop openings and discussion, special presentations and other materials will be published in upcoming issues of *Political Affairs* and *Party Builder*. The complete proceedings will be published in a book and the keynote will come out in booklet form very shortly. This will provide all the material needed to help the membership study the conference material and discussions.

To reach a collective assessment, we need to keep in mind the following points as a backdrop to discussions:

- 1) We had no precedent for this conference in our Party, or in the world movement for that matter. Preparations for the conference were conducted by trial and error, making decisions as we went along, reacting to suggestions and proposals from the Party across the country. We had to plan it without the benefit of previous experience. Right from the word go we had to struggle to keep the conference ideological, to keep it from becoming a discussion of tactics. Secondly, we had to try to keep the conference from becoming a discussion about developments in the Soviet Union. At the beginning there were pressures to do just

that, though those pressures declined as events took place and comrades began to change their thinking on this.

2) The conference was called at a good moment in history. For example, it took place at the time when the world communist movement was struggling against what I would call a strong current of "de-ideologization." In our discussions with leading comrades from parties in the socialist countries, it was clear they were contending with such a current and that the tide was just beginning to turn as our conference took shape. The period of turmoil and confusion is receding and ideological questions are now being discussed on the sound basis of Marxism-Leninism. The period of loose experimentation with non-Marxist ideas, almost natural in a time of trial and error, is over. For this reason, there has been great interest expressed in our conference.

The world communist movement is anxiously awaiting the conference documents. Our deliberations will become a part of these developments in the world movement. It could not be otherwise. Our conference was influenced by these developments and, in turn, it will influence them.

3) The conference also came at a good time in our Party's history. Ideological questions have slowly become a bigger factor in the functioning of our Party. There have emerged some new ideological concepts, some influenced by world events, some moving in the wrong direction. Some ideological corrosion was appearing in our Party. Thus, the conference came at what is perhaps a turning point in our Party, because objective and subjective factors were coming together and ideological questions began to gel and rise to the surface.

The Party's response to the conference call was unprecedented. The great majority of articles and other contributions were honest, healthy, meaningful and probing. There was more rich material than ever before, which reflects the fact that we have a lively, thinking party. And there was greater excitement and more productive discussions at the conference itself because of this preparation process.

The conference was testimony to the fact that our Party is not dead or in crisis. It is a live, vibrant, acting and thinking organ that is articulate and vocal.

In the pre-conference period some things became clear. For

example, many comrades were initially afraid of tackling ideology, including some in leading circles of our Party. There was a certain fear, and why this was so is an important question. It was not only the fact that we tend to be practical, pragmatic. That is a factor, but not the main reason. Perhaps it is because we do not deal with ideological questions very often. Or, because there are some ideological differences. I had the feeling that there were some who tended to deal with questions by silence and passively observing.

For this reason, it was worthwhile to spend some time defining ideology. At this stage, ideology is an especially important aspect of our work. It will serve us well in the long run in comrades' ability to deal with questions, probe and come to conclusions.

Socialism's future

Some comrades have expressed concern about the future of socialism in Poland and Hungary. I think there is some reason for concern. We cannot ignore these developments. We have to deal with them, especially as they affect our country.

The conference was timely because some of the events in the socialist world have had the effect of a certain ideological corrosion in the Party. There is some loss of confidence in and enthusiasm about socialism as it is being built around the world. These feelings are not obvious or on the surface. They are expressed by an uneasiness. They are vague and often unconscious. Even the excitement stimulated by the workshop and discussions about Socialism USA is a reflection of this unease. Comrades want to have a vision of the future to hold onto. They see socialism in the United States as a kind of replacement for their enthusiasm about world socialism in the process of reconstruction. The conference helped to overcome this corrosion. There is a new basis for thinking about world developments in a new framework.

Our Party, from top to bottom, is able to deal much more effectively with complex questions within an ideological framework. Without the ideological backdrop, confusion results. The articles and discussions showed this. Where there is a low level

of ideological understanding, there is much more confusion about practical questions and current events.

Take, for example, on developments in the socialist countries and the question of war and peace. Comrades in socialist countries make appeals and mold policies from their own perspective, their own vital interests. But we have to view things from our viewpoint. We have to formulate questions based on the problems that developments pose for our country and thus for our Party.

For instance, some in the socialist countries have said they will not use ideology in their trade relations with the capitalist world. But we cannot accept this as the basis on which to formulate our positions, because this policy has a different effect on the class struggle here.

We cannot de-ideologize our position because the Bush Administration is using ideology as never before, to try to subvert and destroy socialism, especially in countries like Poland and Hungary. There is a new bourgeois ideological offensive based on the premise that "communism is dead" and that socialist countries must move in the direction of a capitalist market economy. In order to achieve their aims, Bush is offering to buy out socialism with U.S. imperialist dollars.

It is clear the Bush Administration believes it can destroy socialism in these countries. The aim of the recent capitalist economic summit was the elimination of socialism in these countries. They are joining forces to try to buy socialism out.

Therefore, from our viewpoint we must expose and challenge this new offensive. We must defend socialism and work to convince the American people that, with all its problems, socialism is the only alternative, the inevitable alternative to capitalism. And we cannot do this if we abandon the ideological struggle, leaving that field to the capitalist class.

Is it possible that socialism is in danger? Anything is possible. But I do not believe their designs will succeed. The roots of socialism are sunk deep in all the socialist countries, notwithstanding the period of experimentation and revitalization they are going through on one level or another. Some of the socialist countries are even going to take backward steps to sidetrack and overcome difficulties. This does not change the basic system.

A conclusion from this conference is that ideology is the front of action. In other words, we must harmonize ideology with action. How much better our clubs will reach out as a result of this conference, how much better they recruit, will be a measure of its success.

Enthusiasm and confidence are a powerful basis for action. In combination with the power of our ideology and Party unity, they are unbeatable. Our conference was a grand testimony to the greatness of the Communist Party USA.

Notes

As socialist countries take steps of experimentation, some of these measures prove to be mistakes. Then opposition develops among the population. This is happening in countries like Poland and Hungary. There are experiments and when they begin to fail, opposition and resistance to wrong steps emerge.

There is trial and error in socialist countries. It is always necessary to find new ways of doing things. But there is a limit to trial and error. In China, when they embarked on a path of allowing corporations to entrench themselves, with the greed and corruption this brought, the leadership eventually realized they had gone too far and decided to slow down this development, because opposition was growing. Unemployment and inflation had grown, and, added to the student demonstrations, this created turmoil in the country which they are now working to overcome.

On the question of war or peace: There is a new design by the Bush Administration to activate a plan for nuclear destruction of the Soviet Union, which includes detailed plans for annihilating not only the Kremlin but the deepest bunkers where the Soviet leadership would work from. This is a new development in Bush's contribution to "politics by other means." Let me quote from a recent article from the *Los Angeles Times News Service*:

Quietly without public debate, the Bush Administration is preparing drastic changes in the basic U.S. strategy for fighting a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, including the creation of new weapons so devastating they could penetrate the deepest underground bunkers and kill the entire Soviet leadership.

Thus, on the one hand we completely agree with the Soviet peace policy and its initiatives. We believe that future nuclear disarmament agreements with the Bush Administration are possible. But not without the element of pressure and struggle. That is our task, our responsibility.

Linking ideology and action

The key to success in our future work is to link ideological work to action.

In line with this we are making the following proposals:

1) That states and clubs should consider holding follow-up ideological conferences, geared to linking our ideology with struggles and movements.

2) To utilize our 70th anniversary celebration to hold large public rallies.

3) Insure the success of the Winston Enrollment Campaign beginning in September.

4) In order to help focus our work and orient us on action, selecting a major issue in the public's mind and initiating a campaign around it — such as the fight for a national health care law. The potential is great; for example, in Ohio there is a massive movement for an Ohio Health Law, based on the Canadian national health plan.

Another focus should be to take steps to launch a counter-offensive on affirmative action, to reverse the Supreme Court rulings. Support for the national demonstration called by the NAACP for August 26 should be a focus for the immediate period.

5) Study and revise our Party Program, which we will now begin, as a continuation of the conference discussions as we will be dealing with the same questions.

There is a general consensus on the work of this conference. The discussions and the applause demonstrated this. This should become the guiding framework for the work of our Party as a whole and individual members.

The first test of this will be the Winston Enrollment Campaign. We have to prove to ourselves that we can grow faster. This will be a test for the Party and for each of us.

As we know, the clubs are where we face all the real difficulties of the struggle. The challenges are direct and the problems are sharpest there — this is more so in the clubs than on all other levels of the Party.

In the clubs you either go forward or backward. Clubs must produce. That is why discussion from comrades who are active in clubs is always more realistic, more down to earth. How we bring together the spirit and outlook of this conference and the realities of club life will be the real test of how we use this conference to go forward.