

Forward

Journal of Socialist Thought

Number 4

January 1985

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Introduction

We are republishing *Forward* after an absence of five years. The last issue, in January 1980, carried a fairly long analysis of the history of the Revolutionary Communist League. At that time, *Forward* was an organ of the U.S. League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).

Since then *Forward* has been reorganized. An editorial board has been set up, consisting of the three of us, Anne Adams, Carl Davidson and Michael Lee. Over the months ahead we will be trying to expand and further develop our editorial board, which will be solely responsible for the content of *Forward*.

All over the U.S., people are involved in struggles of many kinds — to win union recognition, stop racist attacks, oppose U.S. intervention, defend women's rights and many others. In the course of these battles, theoretical questions always arise — how do we analyze the conditions of the struggle and the different forces involved? what is the best way to move things forward? how does this particular issue relate to others?

We want to help answer these questions from a Marxist-Leninist point of view, which can show how to get the most out of our successes and how to learn from our setbacks. This means we will be taking up questions from the stand and methodology of dialectical materialism. We do not see Marxism-Leninism as an abstract doctrine which provides formulas or pat answers to our problems, but rather as a revolutionary, scientific approach to solving the problems facing the people. Marxism-Leninism cannot be dogmatic. It develops mainly through the continual proc-

ess of summing up the experiences of the masses. It is only useful and relevant if it takes reality as its starting point and is creatively applied to the actual conditions we face.

Forward will also be published in a non-sectarian way. We will be asking other activists to become contributing editors. We will be seeking contributions to the journal from many sources, and will encourage debate on key issues. We see the need for greater unity on the left, especially around developing our understanding of the theoretical questions confronting us. William Gallegos, a leader of the League, makes an important point in his article. He says, "In order for the left to grow as a force and realize its potential, we think an important objective must be a clearer understanding of its goals in the minds of the U.S. masses. In addition the breaking down of sectarianism and narrowmindedness is imperative. The entire left must seek ways to work together to advance the mass movement."

We are determined to make Marxism-Leninism a powerful, guiding force in U.S. politics, a viable political trend which people in the U.S. can understand and support. Hopefully *Forward* can contribute to making this happen.

We invite comments on the articles in this issue and welcome contributions for future editions of *Forward*.

— *Anne Adams*
— *Carl Davidson*
— *Michael Lee*

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This issue of *Forward* opens with a series of three articles on the 1984 elections. Amiri Baraka, a member of the League's Central Committee, presents in his first article, **!!@*#! Reagan!**, the League's views on the elections, and their implications for the country and for the left. His second article, **The Need for a Rainbow Agenda**, talks about the need to develop a people's program that can forcefully present the demands of Black people and the multinational working class. It was written in June 1984 before the Democratic Convention. The article includes some of the main points of the League's minimum program. The third article in this series is by Shelly Ross. In **Moving Toward Higher Ground**, Ross presents her perspective on the accomplishments and significance of the Rainbow Coalition.

Next comes an interview with William Gallegos, a member of the Central Committee of the League of Revolutionary Struggle. In **Party Building and the Left Today**, Gallegos presents the League's views on some of the common questions facing the left in the U.S. We plan to have an interview with a League spokesperson on topical questions in every issue of *Forward*.

Then we present a history of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CPML) written by one of its former leading members, Carl Davidson. In **Lessons from the Collapse of the CPML**, Davidson presents his analysis of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the CPML, and the reasons for its demise. This is an important question, since the CPML was at one time the largest Marxist-Leninist organization in the U.S., and its collapse was a major setback.

Tak Matsusaka, a longtime activist in the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association from Boston, then offers his analysis of China's new rural responsibility system in **The Revolution in China's Countryside**. This new policy has generated a lot of discussion about what direction China is taking, and Matsusaka discusses the perspective behind the new policy.

Next comes a book review of three recent histories of the Communist Party USA. In **What Can We Learn from the CPUSA's History?**, Peter Shapiro, labor writer for *UNITY*, discusses some of the problems with these three books and some perspectives on the work of the CPUSA.

Finally, this issue closes with a section from a poem by Amiri Baraka on national oppression and the history of the African American Liberation Movement. It is titled **YYYYYYY**  (18).



!! @ ☆ # !! **REAGAN !!**

The State of Black America The State of the U.S.A. What Now?

Amiri Baraka

Jesse Jackson's *Rainbow Coalition* and the presidential campaign that emerged from that dynamic interrelationship between the stancing of the petty bourgeoisie and the needs of poor and working people, most particularly the needs of the Afro American Nation — these provided us with a generally progressive and positive campaign. Although the campaign itself revealed how all the classes in society react to important trends in the country.

Jackson's campaign pushed the whole electorate to the left, eliminating outright the far right of the Democratic Party in the primaries.

Jesse was precise enough on the issues to upset the far right slant of the so-called Democratic "moderates." The continuous raising of the lack of democracy at all levels of American life, which Jesse somewhat trivialized under the rubric of "Fairness," was still effective and catalytic.

How delegates are elected, the electoral vote and its denial of direct democracy, the Middle East and opposition to the U.S. imperialist "Israel only" policy (and the implications on both U.S. foreign and domestic relations). The question of opposing U.S. marriage with the fascist white supremacy cap-

Amiri Baraka is the father of the Black Arts Movement, a professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and a member of the Central Committee of the U.S. League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).

Jackson's campaign pushed the whole electorate to the left, eliminating outright the far right of the Democratic Party in the primaries.

(Facing page)

UNITY PHOTO: DEBORAH LOWE

italists running South Africa. The question of the lack of a coherent or racism-free policy on Africa in general. Plus the constant emphasis on the domestic violence Reagan's anti-working class, white chauvinist policies, are dealing to the African American people in this country and the other oppressed nationalities, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asians, Native Americans — Jackson also highlighted the exploitation of white workers and the bankruptcy and hypocrisy of Reagan's fake populism and real move to a *corporate state*, in which the whole of U.S. society would be run by private enterprise, the public sector all but demolished, and increasing repression the legislated necessity to preserve a semblance of order.

Jesse's appearances, the opening for public struggle over democracy in this country, the measure of American bourgeois and petty bourgeois leadership; all this was extremely useful to the mass democratic movement.

Gary Hart was used as a "cover" for Jackson like Pat Boone covered Fats Domino in the 50's, to deflect leadership from Jackson. If Hart had any real substance, he could have beaten Mondale. But, alas, he was only a cover!

For all its marvelous elation and re-beginnings of the national democratic movement, short stopped in the 70's by state violence and assassinations, cooptations and imprisonment, the problem with the Jackson campaign was in the class views and stands of its leadership! which could not finally respond as it needed to the mounting assaults by the bourgeoisie.

We should know that principally the Jackson "ethnic slur" and the sudden prominence of Louis Farrakhan were just diversions put out there to confuse, divide and cover U.S. policy in the Middle East.

But there is another lesson in this — the intellectual and political vulnerability of nationalism.

Nobody wants to be called out of their names. You know how you would act if somebody started dropping a stereotype on you!

Farrakhan must distinguish between Judaism and Zionism. It is the Zionists who control Israel and have the most influence now in the Jewish bourgeoisie in the U.S. (and South Africa), not the religion.

The results of the recent election showed the majority of Jews voted against Reagan, despite the Zionist bourgeoisie's support of Reagan and their aid to him by constantly attacking Jackson.

But even more fundamental than the issue of petty bour-

geois nationalism and the bourgeoisie's *use* of Farrakhan — was Jackson's inconsistent (or consistent) class stand! The opportunity Jesse had in San Francisco, speaking before an 85,000,000 viewer media audience was unprecedented!

He should have attacked Mondale's racism and conservatism. He should have highlighted Mondale's opposition to the Rainbow's four minority planks. The response of the black masses and Rainbow forces to Andy Young's betrayal and their booing of Coretta King for defending him, showed the mood of the black delegates! The people at home's jaws were even tighter!

Jesse had to attack Mondale because Mondale is the representative of one sector of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Our vote for him was a vote *against* Reagan. It was *tactical*, not a marriage!

Some of us who did not understand this did not even bother to vote; there are over 10,000,000 blacks still unregistered to vote, and there are more black and other unregistered voters than Reagan's margin of victory!

Jackson's responsibility to his constituency, the Afro American majority and all the forces of the Rainbow, principally the multinational working class, was to make this stance *clear*!

But one part of the principal problem with the petty bourgeoisie is that they are always attracted by the bourgeoisie's institutions. Theirs is the true "double consciousness" DuBois spoke of. How to be an American and an African American at the same time! It is impossible. How



African Americans did not have the right to vote until Reconstruction.



Jackson's presidential campaign propelled him onto the national political stage, as in this pre-primary debate with Walter Mondale, Gary Hart and Rueben Askew.

to represent the masses *and* their enemies, at the same time. Again, impossible!

Jackson's apology to the bourgeoisie became a centerpiece of his speech. It should not have been. The centerpiece should have been an attack on Mondale and mobilization to defeat Reagan!

In public, in response to why his speech did not so focus, Jesse said he wanted to take the "high road." The road of the petty bourgeoisie — to wit, moderate your attack and get some *credit* in the Democratic Party. For when you want to buy in later!

Too many people close to Jesse want principally to become big colored muckety mucks in the Democratic Party! The old cooptation syndrome. Julian Bond and Andy Young (and Coretta King and of course Charlie Rangel) seem to be passing into comprador land, with their support of Mondale from the beginning — (again the conflict between the black national bourgeoisie who are oppressed by imperialism to the extent that they seek real self-determination, and the comprador bourgeoisie who are simply imperialism's employees.)

The only useful direction for a Rainbow Coalition is in the direction of independent mass related local and national politics. It would be a fraud if it was only to serve as a funnel to bring more people, particularly blacks, into the Democratic Party!

That was what was wanted from Jesse at the Democratic convention, independence from the Democratic Party — the voice of self-determination. Plus a further commitment to do battle in a scientific way for black self preservation and the progress of the entire society.

The petty bourgeoisie, finally, will not go far enough. They are not *militant* enough! They achieve some partial goal useful only to the black middle class (and *many* times the big bourgeoisie!) and feel the struggle is *over* — a sign of the class, a well paying prestigious “position,” a post, a spotlight, a head or ass pat, and “they cool.” While the rest of us are shot in the living rooms of our houses for not paying rent on time. Or see our children assassinated for being black and at loose ends. The penalty for stealing a car in Newark is murder by the police!

All of us must speak out now against the truly dangerous continued rightward plunge of the Reagan-led U.S. foreign policy and domestic policies. The only certain goals of Reagan’s direction are domestic fascism or world war three. His presidency will distort and shape the Supreme Court to become a right wing instrument on the order of those that set the stage for the fascist takeover in the last days of the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic.

We must try to become more active in a consistent way in local politics, organizing in the spirit of the Rainbow coalition, multinational electoral work and ongoing united front work around principal issues.

Voter registration *must become* the rallying mobilizing cry for the working class, oppressed nationality and black communities across the land. *Particularly the black masses must be made to register and vote!* Every one of our local election campaigns must aid this campaign. All of our other united front and coalition work. All issues must be linked to their political origins and the concepts of political power and the black masses’ powerlessness and deprivation of democratic rights.

The consistent and well distributed offering of our *program* for revolution in the U.S., particularly, at this point, this minimum program of democratic struggle must be raised and explained!

We must ready a struggle against Reagan’s repression of dissent and such attacks as the recent arrest of eight people in New York City associated with the Black Liberation Movement. Reagan will openly attack and attempt to decimate the left. A new form of 50’s McCarthyism will emerge. Plus attacks on all progressive forces in the public sector and the continued attempt at its elimination.

Progressive intellectuals will also be attacked and public arts programs defunded, public radio and television reduced almost to nothing.

Reagan is coming. Make no mistake. We must be ready,

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“Get Out The Vote” drive in Seattle.

The African American struggle for democracy and equality is at the forefront of militant democratic struggle. We are at the forefront because we are still at the bottom of society.

full of revolutionary optimism and armed with a plan (strategy and tactics) and an understanding of the science of revolution!

We must be building mass organizations of struggle rooted in mass movement. *The most advanced political forces in U.S. society must be in communication* to create larger and more stable instruments of resistance. The left must finally be as willing to enter into coalitions with each other as they are to tail the petty bourgeoisie.

It was partially the Left's less than leadership position in the Rainbow Coalition and in the Jesse Jackson campaign that allowed the rightist black nationalist forces to grow so strong in the Jackson campaign. If we can enter into coalitions with the Black United Front, Democratic Party, Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan, we can work tactically with the "revisionist" Left, or even the infantile left. In some instances we might even have to work with Trots (We worked with and *for* Mondale!) as long as they're not too crazy!

The slogan Marxist-Leninists Unite — win the advanced to communism is correct. We should also be trying to win the less advanced away from capitalism!

All of our organizing must also be carefully cognizant of U.S. war policies in Central America and the Caribbean. But *free Puerto Rico!* must become a constant companion of our critical opposition to Reagan's quickly forming option to invade Nicaragua.

The Klan bully style of the Grenada invasion should alert us to Reagan's barbarian proclivities! We must oppose the



Los Angeles rally against U.S. intervention in El Salvador, 1984.

draft and mobilize the student and youth movement against it.

But the rising tide of black African resistance to fascist apartheid must be given a high priority in our periodicals and political work. The death of apartheid means revolution in Great Britain and the terminal weakening of U.S. imperialism. As the contradiction between U.S. government support for South Africa and the people's resistance to racist apartheid and colonialism intensify, we must understand that U.S. support for South Africa is a major weakness in U.S. imperialist policy, though one they think necessary! Finally it must be made clear to the U.S. masses that support for South African fascism is racism *most crude!*

South African colonialism is such a complete anachronism now, that it cannot be easily covered. We must dwell on its crudity, to better expose the backward stance of America's rulers and their commitment to white supremacy.

We must gear our intensification of struggle against South Africa to the rising tide of struggle inside South Africa! We must make it impossible for Reagan or the bourgeoisie to shield apartheid-colonialism. Our slogan is *Death to apartheid*, just as we say *Death to the Klan!* These are two sides of the same struggle. The elimination of white supremacy internationally.

Class struggle is developing more sharply in the black community every day. Black Anti-Reagan voting accounted for 96% of the black vote. But the Reaganite minority including Clarence Pendleton (and billboard Toms Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and Floyd Patterson) are demonstrating what the worst House slaves or Jewish collaborators in Nazi Germany must have been like.

No matter, the African American community can claim the largest block of Anti-Reagan votes of any ethnic group. So we have demanded to be counted, but we must raise our numbers.

We must urge a reorganization of the Rainbow Coalition with more influence coming from the masses, and support for local elections and a national strategy, including mass mobilizations around critical issues!

We must continue to make alliances with workers organizations, anti-war groups, anti-draft groups, coalitions fighting women's oppression and Reagan's anti-democracy.

Another criticism Jesse should have made of Mondale was in Mondale's insult to black women, by refusing even to *pretend* to be considering a black woman for vice president! Jesse first raised the issue of a woman VP. N.O.W. capital-



UNITY PHOTO

Atlanta rally against Reagan's policies.

ized on the issue, was oblivious as well of the needs of black women, and made no real impression during the campaign itself. Ferraro's candidacy was thereby sapped of its total impact by *NOW's* failure to do real grass roots work with the masses of women around the campaign.

The Latino vote was also consistently Anti-Reagan, but the Cuban *gusanos*, who are fugitives from Castro's Cuba, made Reagan a contender.

A closer class analysis must be made of all the sectors of U.S. society who were anti-Reagan, and that relationship of class forces can be the basis of our continuing anti-Reagan struggles! Who are our friends, who are our enemies?

Reagan's continuing support for fascist governments like Chile and the Philippines, while he attacks democratic Nicaragua and installs a right wing government in El Salvador, should demonstrate he is a right wing ideologue with not even the consistent moderating influence of corporate business goals. The demagogic use of religion and jingoist patriotism are straight out of 1930's Germany.

But it is my view that since the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, the society has marched headlong and desperately guided to the far Right. And it is the assassins of those progressive 60's political figures who are now in the power behind the action in the White House!

The most important opposition to American Neo Fascism would be a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party — to organize all the classes in U.S. society to fight for democracy and socialism.

A party of the working class, the most advanced kind of class organization capable of leading the struggle in the myriad sectors of U.S. society and drawing them together into one revolutionary force!

But our basic stance must be revolutionary optimism and a deepening understanding of how to utilize contradictions within imperialism, in order to overthrow it.

A cultural and revolutionary arts movement is a must in this period! We must fight idea with idea, and expose the bourgeois censorship and domination of the arts and media, and mobilize artists and audience to oppose this.

Jackson's Rainbow Coalition must be an important focus for our organizing. But we must fight for working class leadership throughout the Rainbow Coalition and expose petty bourgeois vacillation even while we participate in various manifestations of the anti-imperialist united front the Black Liberation Movement is objectively a leading part of. The

African American struggle for democracy and equality is at the forefront of militant democratic struggle in this country. Resistance and struggle have been at the base of our continuing battle for Self Determination. We are at the forefront of this struggle, because we are still at the bottom of society.

Our traditions are revolutionary and democratic. Our main political leaders, artists and intellectuals have been important revolutionary democrats. Douglass, DuBois, Frances Harper, Hughes, Nat Turner, Prosser, Vessey, Tubman, Truth, Hurston, Garvey, McKay, Wright, Margaret Walker, Baldwin, the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Arts Movement, the Rainbow Coalition, the New wave of black women writers, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson! Ours is a tradition of ongoing struggle for democracy and self-determination. We have told this tale in song and story, political manifesto and decisive action.

But these are dangerous times. The Reagan Right wing juggernaut is nothing if it is not openly anti-black. We must intensify our opposition to it, rebuild stronger coalitions and a more progressive national democratic united front, that is multinational and guided by the needs of the whole working class.

The enemies of black self determination are the enemies of the whole working class. The profiteers of racism are the exploiters of all workers, and the affluent torturers of the black nation. The attackers of women's equality and the ERA are the forces who make money from the oppression of women. It is this same tiny class, 6/10ths of 1 percent of the



Malcolm X was assassinated because he was a powerful mobilizer of the African American people.



League of Revolutionary Struggle program in Oakland, California.

population, the racist imperialist class, that must be overthrown if black liberation (or socialism) is ever to become a reality!

The majority of the people in the U.S. have the same enemies, no matter their nationality or sex — the white racist imperialist class. In these critical times they are backed against the wall in their ongoing struggle with the other superpower imperialists the Soviet Union. This is why the new abrasive and aggressive counter attack by the Reagan sector of the bourgeoisie. This is their last gasp; such contention with the Soviets could very well lead to an imperialist war, which might alter the quality and structure of human life on this planet.

In the 60's and 70's a great many people were part of the broad anti-racist anti-imperialist united front that carried on the civil rights movement in its whole manifestation. But key elements of that front have deteriorated. Many of the young Reagan souped up white students might well have been fighting shoulder to shoulder with blacks to end American apartheid in the South in the 60's. Now, in startling reflection of the rightward surge of U.S. society, we see many such students tricked by Ronald Reagan's macho man gibberish.

We must work to rebuild the broadness of the national democratic united front against imperialism, and build a truly revolutionary party at the same time. But we must not submit to Reagan's cryptic neo fascism. We must combat it stroke for stroke and raise the cry of Self Determination and socialist revolution.



Tide of struggle in South Africa is rising . . .

In order for the black nation to survive, the U.S. finally must become a democratic society. (How could it ever have been truly a democracy — if we were slaves?) As DuBois said, if the U.S. does not allow the African American people to enter the society on the basis of equality and democracy, the U.S. will cease to exist! This is not a threat, but an observation.

ii @ * # !! Reagan!

Build a united front! Build a party!

Long live the struggle for Democracy and Socialism!

UNITY PHOTO



...and is inspiring a strong anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. Here, demonstration in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, late 1984.

Jesse
Jackson

Jesse
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The Need for a Rainbow Agenda

Amiri Baraka

The real test of the Jackson campaign must be in its practical *use* to Black people and the whole multinational working class. That use is not just feelgoodism and cheerleading consciousness raising. (Though for sho' we need both of those in a desperate way.)

The most important *use* to the U.S. masses must be not only in raising the issues, mobilizing the people, voter registration, hopefully creating structures and a progressive network to localize the Rainbow Coalition in states and cities across the country, to put progressive candidates into political races after the presidential campaign is over.

But now we must create an *agenda* for *negotiation* similar to the Black agenda that came out of the National Black Political Assembly in 1972, which was "sold out" by Black petty bourgeois electoral leadership at the 1972 Miami Democratic Convention.

Negotiations with the Democratic Party

The San Francisco Convention must first see changes now in the way delegates are selected. No matter who wins the popular vote, delegates are selected by the old-boy system and corrupt political machine, not the people. (Thus Jesse Jackson received 22% of the popular vote, but only 7% of the delegates. By contrast, Walter Mondale won 39% of the popular vote, but received 51% of the delegates.)

This article was written in June 1984, just before the Democratic Convention. It is reprinted from the June 20, 1984, issue of UNITY and the Summer/Fall 1984 issue of THE BLACK NATION.



March for Jackson in New York.



A group of Reconstruction congressmen. From 1891-1945 there was only one Black representative in Congress at any one time. From 1901-1929 there were no Black representatives in Congress at all.

We must also question loud and clear the very method for electing the U.S. President. Simply because to speed the coming socialist revolution, we must constantly demand higher and higher levels of democracy. It is *Democracy* that threatens capitalism most directly!

For instance, most people do not understand the electoral system, that the American people do not elect the President. The electoral college *selected* by bourgeois-controlled state legislators actually elects the President. We should point out the insidious hidden denial of democracy this system is, that it is possible to become President of the United States *without* winning the popular vote, and that this has happened nine times. If we go further, we find the bottom line of this evasion of democracy by the bourgeoisie was to deny political power to the Afro American people in the 19th century. Specifically surrounding the Hayes-Tilden compromise, which ended the Reconstruction, and plunged Black people back into near slavery and "separate but equal."

The consistent truth that American history teaches is that the existence and influence of Black slavery, the revolutionary promise of the Civil War, the failure of Reconstruction, have always created a lie as American democracy. The truth is that such democracy has never existed vis-a-vis Blacks, and because of this *literally* has never existed for the *majority* of U.S. citizens!!

This is, on one hand, the function of the Jackson campaign, to expose such consistent lies, and to show that the truth is the *absence* of democracy in the U.S. How could

there ever have been democracy in a country based on slavery? A country growing rapidly senile, based on the material and psychological dependence on national oppression (and, of course, imperialism).

The agenda must be created in consultation with all the forces in the Rainbow. Such an agenda must go directly to the main issues at the source of the Afro American people's continuous struggle for democracy and self-determination. Issues like political power, voting rights (voting should be mandatory for citizens — not the draft, just as taxes are mandatory now), employment, education, economic development, foreign policy (the official government *abandoning* of the South African fascists, economically and politically; withdrawal of U.S. troops from Grenada; abandonment of U.S. interventionist policies all over the world — Nicaragua, El Salvador, Lebanon), cabinet appointments, government posts, reinstatement of programs beneficial to the masses, tax restructuring.

An example of a revolutionary democratic agenda is the Minimum Program of Struggle of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist).

These negotiations are the real meat of the Jackson campaign. The majority of people must benefit from these negotiations between Jackson and the Democratic Party.

If such negotiations do not come about, then it is obvious that the amazing political dynamic created by the Jackson campaign will be dissipated and Reagan will win in November. Because there is *no way* that either Mondale or Hart, even with a woman vice presidential candidate, can win without the *Rainbow* that Jesse represents, i.e., to mobilize the Black masses and progressives of all nationalities.

This is the reason why now is the time for all sectors of the Rainbow to put forward collectively a *Rainbow Agenda*. (A national meeting to put such an agenda together would be the best method.) But failing that, the masses themselves must put forward at the local and state levels, the main issues, practical reforms and concessions to be negotiated on at the San Francisco Convention, and to be struggled around in our local and regional communities after the Convention. Particularly, we must now see the national political agenda of those calling themselves Marxists.

UNITY PHOTO



Jackson campaign rally in Charcoal Alley, Los Angeles.

A Minimum Program of Struggle

The working class, oppressed nationalities and other peoples in the U.S. are struggling daily to improve their living conditions, defend and expand their democratic rights, and win peace and social progress. The League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist) supports and raises the following as some of the main immediate demands against the monopoly capitalists and the government. The League understands that these demands are partially realizable under the present social system and that a radical transformation of society, socialism, will be necessary to realize them in a genuine and full way. The struggle for these demands is an integral part of the revolutionary process.

These demands are partially realizable under the present system. Socialism will be necessary to realize them in a genuine and full way.

A. Some General Demands for the People

The right to a decent standard of living

- a guaranteed minimum income or jobs for all at standard wages
- comprehensive national health insurance and social security
- decent and affordable housing
 - eviction protection
 - rent control
 - no arbitrary discrimination based on nationality, age, children, marital status, sex, source or level of income, physical/mental disability or religion
 - an end to gentrification of minority and low-income areas
- public ownership of utilities
- low-cost mass transportation

Free high-quality public education at all levels

- equal access to education for all nationalities
- community control with parent and stu-

dent input

- bilingual and multicultural education

Reform of the income tax system

- reduction of income taxes for working people
- a progressive income tax system for individuals
- no taxation without representation
- raising of corporate taxes

Full and equal political rights

- an end to the two-party monopoly
- full voting rights for oppressed nationalities — an end to gerrymandering and dual registration

End legal and extralegal political repression and violence

- an end to police brutality and harassment
- the immediate outlawing of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis
- the right to legal representation
- the dismantling of the FBI

Protection of the environment

- enforcement, protection and strengthening of environmental protection laws
- no nuclear power and no nuclear waste disposal, especially in Chicano and Native American lands, since capitalism cannot provide or ensure adequate safety

UNITY PHOTO



Voter registration in Atlanta. Millions of Black people are not registered because of restrictive regulations.

UNITY PHOTO



Reagan has trampled on the rights of lower stratum workers.

Workers demand jobs, the right to organize, democratic unions, safe working conditions, and equality for oppressed nationality and women workers.

- safe disposal of chemical waste, no chemical dumping in residential areas
- Public funds for the arts and for amateur athletics

B. For the Protection and Advancement of the Working Class

The working class has particular demands and needs in its struggle against the monopoly capitalist class and in strengthening the labor movement. These include both legislative and contractual demands.

Jobs

- a shorter workweek, 30 hours for 40 hours pay
- no job loss
 - no layoffs without full transfer and retraining rights for comparable positions
 - no replacement of full-time workers with part-time workers
 - no reduction of the work force through attrition (such as retirement)
- income and benefits maintenance
 - job-to-job unemployment benefits, benefits to begin prior to first job when worker reaches age 18
 - a moratorium on all debts for the unemployed
 - no home foreclosures, evictions or utility shutoffs for the unemployed
- no new plants domestically or overseas by a company when existing capacity is underutilized or when workers are on layoff
- amendment of the National Labor Relations Act to outlaw run-away shops and other means of avoiding union contracts by shifting capital or production
- protection from plant closings
 - national legislation to include two-year notification, penalty tax to the community, full retraining paid by the company for comparable employment at union wages
 - contractual agreements for severance, benefits and full payment

of dislocation expenses, with ten-to-one penalties if broken

The right to organize

- prompt union representation elections within a specified time
- prompt resolution of unfair labor practice charges and stiff penalties for employers who violate the law
- abolition of Section 14-b (the “right-to-work” provision) of the Taft-Hartley Act
- legalization of secondary boycotts as an organizing tool
- repeal of all anti-labor legislation
- the full right to strike, including government employees
- establishment of amalgamated locals in all AFL-CIO unions to facilitate organizing drives on the local level

Full democratization of the trade unions

- right of membership to ratify all agreements
- direct election of officers
- contracts and union affairs conducted multilingually, based on nationality composition of work force

Decent and safe working conditions

- health and safety standards established independently by workers in each industry

UNITY PHOTO: LOU MARCHETTI



Las Vegas hotel strikers demanding a decent contract.



UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

San Francisco
Chinatown rally.

- worker health and safety councils in each plant with the power to stop production when standards are not met
- the right to refuse all unsafe job assignments
- no forced overtime
- no rotating shifts

Equality for oppressed nationality and women workers

- no discrimination in hiring, promotion, pay or job assignment, based on nationality or sex
- affirmative action in hiring and promotions
- job recall based on modified seniority to retain the percentage of oppressed nationalities and women based on figures at peak employment, or the percentage of oppressed nationalities in the surrounding population
- full maternity benefits and job security for women
- twenty-four hour child care

C. Demands for the Oppressed Nationalities

The oppressed nations and nationalities must have full democratic rights. The oppressed nations have the right to self-determination, which means the right to determine their political relationship to the United States. This includes the right to secede and form an independent state.

The oppressed national minorities have the right to political power in their areas of concentration. This may take the form of local or administrative autonomy, through which an oppressed nationality has the right to determine its own political, cultural, educational and other social affairs. These forms of autonomy will do away with the present practice where political districts are gerrymandered to prevent oppressed nationalities from holding office or exercising political power, even in areas where they constitute a majority.

Some general demands for democratic rights for the oppressed nations and minority nationalities in the U.S.:

- Recognition by the federal government that the U.S. is a multinational country, that is, made up of many different nationalities
- Equal political, voting, cultural, educational and social rights for all nationalities. All nationalities should be able to

use their languages in all official dealings including voting, education and government services.

- An end to all racist violence and persecution
- Full redress and reparations for all grievances stemming from unjust acts committed by the federal government
- Unconditional residency for all undocumented immigrants

In addition, each of the oppressed nationalities has particular demands:

Afro-Americans: The Afro-American people constitute an oppressed nation in the Black-belt South and an oppressed national minority outside of this area. The Black-belt South is the historic homeland of the Afro-American people and they have a right to claim it. The Afro-American people in the South are a historically constituted nation. They have lived in this territory for over 400 years, and share a common language, culture and economic life. The development of the Afro-American Nation has been marked by the experience of slavery, sharecropping, toil and the systematic denial of the people's political rights. Afro-Americans have developed a distinct class structure and culture. They comprise the majority of the population in this area today, and they should have the democratic right to fully determine the future of this region. The Afro-American Nation is a land of brutal oppression, enforced by racist violence and police repression, and this system is replicated in all areas where Afro-American people live. In their areas of concentration outside of the Afro-American Nation, the Afro-American people should have complete democratic rights and political power.

- reorganization of the county lines of the South to end gerrymandering of the Black population, and end all restrictions on Black voting rights
- redistribution of the land of the big landlords and agribusiness in the South to finally realize "40 acres and a mule" for Black people
- an end to racist violence and persecution by police and extralegal terrorists such as the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis
- the right to self-determination for the Afro-American Nation, the right to determine its relationship to the U.S. government, up to and including seces-

UNITY PHOTO: DEBORAH LOWE



Anti-Klan march in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The Black-belt South is the historic homeland of the Afro-American people and they have a right to claim it.



Chicanos have been systematically forced off their land in the Southwest.

The Chicano people were forged into a distinct nation in the Southwest following the colonial annexation of the region by the U.S.

sion, if desired by the Black masses

- regional or local administrative autonomy in areas of concentration outside the Afro-American Nation

Chicanos: The Chicano people were forged into a distinct nation in the Southwest following the colonial annexation of the region by the U.S. in the Mexican-American War. Ever since that time the Chicano people have been brutally suppressed and discriminated against in all spheres of life, and have been subjugated as a people. Large corporations have driven Chicanos from their lands, and the capitalists have polluted and destroyed the environment as they plundered the mineral wealth of the Chicano Nation. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has helped enforce a reign of terror over the Chicano people and undocumented Mexican workers.

- the right to self-determination for the Chicano Nation in the Southwest
- the upholding of all land rights of the Chicano people under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
- equality for the Spanish language and Chicano culture
- full rights for immigrants:
 - unconditional residency for all undocumented Mexicans
 - equal jobs and pay for immigrant

- workers
- the abolition of the fascist INS border patrol
- an end to INS raids on communities and work places
- local or regional autonomy for Chicanos living in concentrated areas outside of the Chicano Nation

(The League's full Minimum Program of Struggle also includes sections and particular demands for Asian American and Pacific Island peoples; Caribbean peoples; the Hawaiian Nation; Native Alaskan people; Native American Indian peoples; Puerto Rican and other Latino peoples.)

(Section D. of the League's Minimum Program of Struggle includes sections and demands for the following sectors of the people: women; youth; veterans; seniors; cultural workers and intellectuals; farmers; disabled; prisoners; and homosexuals.)

E. Foreign Policy

The current foreign policy of the U.S. government is aimed at preserving U.S. domination over many parts of the world and at competing with the Soviet Union for world power. It is in the interests of the American working people and people in general that the danger of war be reduced in the world, that people and countries advance toward democracy,



UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

The people of the U.S. want a bilateral nuclear arms freeze.

U.S. foreign policy is aimed at preserving U.S. domination over many parts of the world and competing with the Soviet Union for world power.

genuine independence and equality, and that superpower aggression in the world be opposed.

Colonial Possessions

The U.S. has colonized hundreds of islands around the world. The most prominent of these is Puerto Rico. Most of the others are in the Pacific. The people of these lands are colonial subjects with few rights. The U.S. continues to dominate these areas for its own imperialist economic, political and military reasons.

- sovereign rights and independence for all colonial possessions:
 - independence for Puerto Rico; independence for American Samoa, Belau (Palau), Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Midway Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands
 - no military use of these islands
 - observance of a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific; reparations and free health care to all islanders affected by U.S. nuclear testing
 - return the Panama Canal to Panama

Other Foreign Policy Demands

- major reductions in the military budget



UNITY PHOTO

Anti-apartheid demonstration in front of Pittsburgh's Gold and Silver Exchange, December 1984.

- immediate negotiations with the Soviet Union on the freezing, reduction and abolition of all nuclear weapons
- the closing of all U.S. military bases in the third world; an end to U.S. unilateral domination of NATO; negotiations to demilitarize Europe with the abolition of NATO and the Warsaw Pact
- immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Grenada
- the cutting of economic and political ties to South Africa
- an end to U.S. military occupation of south Korea
- abrogation of the Taiwan Relations Act and an end to all U.S. government support for the Taiwan regime
- recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization and support for Palestinian self-determination; stopping aid to Israel
- an end to aid to right-wing military dictatorships
- non-intervention in the affairs of other countries; abolition of the CIA
- normalization of diplomatic relations with all sovereign countries, including Cuba, Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (north Korea), Viet Nam, Albania
- no appeasement of the aggression of the Soviet Union
- beneficial and humanitarian aid to third world countries
- abolition of the third world debt; support of the demands for a new international economic order

UNITY PHOTO



Demonstration for Puerto Rican independence in New York.

KASON



Moving Toward Higher Ground

The Politics of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition

Shelly Ross

Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination is one of the most significant developments in U.S. politics. As a campaign rooted in the struggle of African Americans for full democracy and political power, it not only united the vast majority of African Americans but also struck a chord among progressive people of other nationalities. The Jackson candidacy brought out the importance of the Black vote to the Democratic Party and demonstrated the potential of a broad, multinational progressive coalition.

This article will examine the dynamics of this historic campaign and explore its impact on U.S. society and the further development of the progressive movement.

Roots of the candidacy

The Jackson candidacy arose on very fertile ground. What made his candidacy possible was the tremendous desire among African Americans for an end to racism and national oppression, for equality and self-determination, for full democracy and political power. These revolutionary democratic sentiments were the fuel for Jackson's candidacy.

Jackson, a leader in the Black movement since the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, was perceptive enough to understand that the masses were ready to support a Black presidential candidate, that they wanted someone to articulate issues long on their minds and in their hearts. As Jackson went to the South in the summer of 1983 to spur voter registration, he found a receptive reaction to his call: "From the slaveship to the championship. From the outhouse to the statehouse. Our time has come!"

More than a mesmerizing call to action, Jackson's mes-

Shelly Ross is a staff writer for UNITY newspaper.

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(Facing page)

UNITY PHOTO: AL LAWRENCE



UNITY PHOTO: DEBORAH LOWE

*Voter registration rally
with Jackson, San
Francisco.*

sage carried a deep concern for the fate of Black people under the onslaught of the Reagan administration. After three years of Reaganism, Black unemployment was at Depression levels. Twenty percent of Black adults were unemployed. Fifty percent of Black teenagers could not find jobs. Black unemployment was almost three times that of the national average. Poverty was rising at an alarming rate. One out of every three African Americans was living below the poverty level. Over a five-year period, Reagan had ordered a record \$280 billion cut in social service programs, using the cuts in welfare, health and education programs to boost military spending to a record \$1.6 trillion.

In the area of civil rights, the Reagan administration, through its 17-month delay in accepting key 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act, publicized its resistance to justice and equality. Denial of the right to vote by obstacles such as dual registration (the requirement that one register in both the city and county seat) and inaccessible registrars, plus dilution of the Black vote by gerrymandering (placing the boundaries of a legislative district in a way to divide potential Black majorities), second primaries (run-off elections to declare a winner by majority vote) and at-large elections, effectively disenfranchised and disempowered African Americans and other minorities. Though 53% of all African Americans live in the South, there are only two Black congresspeople from the South. There are 57 congressional districts where African Americans constitute 20% or more of the population, but there are only 20 Black people in Congress. In 1978, African Americans were the majority in 29 cities, but they had *no* Black elected officials because their vote was diluted by gerrymandering and at-large elections. Thus, enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits obstacles to voting and representation, became the cornerstone of Jackson's platform. Without unleashing the potent Black vote, there would be little chance of progressive change in the South.

Sentiment for Jackson's presidential bid continued to build as crowds shouted, "Run, Jesse, Run," wherever he appeared. In July 1983, a group of 125 prominent Black ministers formed a "Draft Jesse" committee which solicited one million signatures calling for Jackson to run for president. The ministers also pledged to raise \$1 million for the Jackson campaign.

Finally, on November 3, 1983, Jackson announced his candidacy, launching one of the most progressive campaigns in recent history. Shortly after his declaration, campaign organizations were initiated in 25 states.

Articulating the Rainbow agenda

When Jackson declared his candidacy, he outlined the major themes and strategy of his campaign. First, he vowed to build a Rainbow Coalition of the rejected and to restore "a moral tone, a redemptive spirit and a sensitivity to the poor and dispossessed of this nation." His primary message was that the concerns and needs of the poor and disenfranchised had been trampled by the Reagan administration and needed to be brought forward before the U.S. public. Thus, Jackson injected the issues of race, exploitation, discrimination, unemployment, immigration and recognition of the interests and needs of the third world nations into a campaign that had focused on the moderate and conservative politics of Mondale and Glenn, who were moving just slightly to the left of Reagan.

Furthermore, Jackson set as a goal changing and enlarging the Democratic Party. In his November 3 speech, Jackson said, "The new covenant we seek with the Democratic Party is one that provides full parity for Blacks and other elements of our Rainbow Coalition. Specifically, we will demand an end to the widespread practice of segregated slate-making in national, state and local elections; we will demand an end to all forms of voting rights impediments. We will demand that the party move aggressively to discipline or replace boll weevils in the Congress . . . and help to elect more Blacks, Hispanics and more women to the House of Representatives and the Senate." These themes were expanded upon throughout the campaign and formed the core of his demands to Mondale after the Democratic Convention.

Thus, Jackson's goal was not simply to win the Democratic nomination or to run a credible campaign, but to present a political agenda that could rally African Americans by appealing to their aspirations for justice and political power, and in turn form the core of a new, multinational progressive movement. Building this mass base would enable Jackson to wring more concessions and greater influence from the Democratic Party, which had long taken Black people and other minorities for granted.

Following his announcement, Jackson embarked on a nationwide speaking tour to increase voter registration and to raise much needed campaign funds. During this period, the media dismissed his campaign as an insignificant but colorful sideshow. Largely regarded as an attempt by Jackson to become recognized as the single Black leader in the U.S., some political observers even said that Jackson's bid could damage



What made Jackson's candidacy possible was the tremendous desire among African Americans for an end to racism and national oppression.



Jackson conferring with Basil Paterson, former deputy mayor of New York City; Assembly-woman Maxine Waters (top left); Jackson national campaign manager Arnold Pinckney (top right); and Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana (foreground).

Black people's goals of defeating Reagan by siphoning off votes from Mondale, the front runner. The media promoted Black bourgeois leaders such as Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, and Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington, who strongly opposed the Jackson candidacy. They argued that it wasn't time for a Black presidential bid, that such a bid would divert needed funds from other winnable races. But this opposition did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the Black masses, who agreed with Jackson that their time had come! The opposition of these Black establishment leaders reflected their own allegiance to the white Democratic Party leaders and their own detachment from the feelings of the Black masses. Jackson's campaign performed a vital service in advancing the national sentiments of the African American people for democracy as it in fact turned out to be a referendum on traditional bourgeois leadership versus reform/progressive politics.

Launching the campaign

The Jackson campaign began with high ideals, but little cash. Because of the lateness of his announcement, the Jackson campaign had to play catch-up from the jump. Because he would not accept any corporate donations, nor PAC (Political Action Committee) money, Jackson had to rely on grass-roots fund raising, which trickled in mainly from the churches and community groups. The African Methodist Church, with 2.2 million members, pledged to raise \$250,000. The National Baptist Church, with 6.8 million members, pledged \$100,000. Although the lack of money slowed Jackson's ability to print campaign literature or hire staff, inexperience also hampered the development of the campaign. A campaign manager was not hired until weeks after the campaign began. Very few national staff were hired to help organize the various regions of the country. Thus, the campaign often varied from state to state. Some states did not have any organization and relied upon visits by Jackson to turn out the votes; other states established networks and constituency groups to publicize the campaign and get out the vote.

The lack of attention paid to the grass-roots organizing, partially due to the lack of funds, but also due to a lack of priority, was a weakness of the Jackson organization. Compounding the weakness was Jackson's tendency towards spontaneity. The campaign schedule was often set at the last minute and subject to radical change, leaving organizers with a large audience but no candidate. Such spontaneity on Jack-

son's part reflected his individualistic, petty bourgeois class background, which did not place the first consideration upon the impact of his actions on other people.

But inexperience and lack of funds were only some of the contributing factors to the campaign's disorganization. The petty bourgeois and national bourgeois leaders within the campaign were reluctant to build a genuine mass movement, which could eventually supplant them. Among the Jackson inner circle were elements of the Black national bourgeoisie, Black professional political operatives, and leaders from the Black churches. Several of the leaders were longtime associates from PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity, Jackson's civil rights organization based in Chicago). Two key leaders were Arnold Pinkney, stockholder and board member of Cleveland's First Bank, and John Bustamonte, Jackson's lawyer and a real estate developer and newspaper publisher. Pinkney has a long history in Cleveland politics with the Stokes brothers (Louis Stokes, a U.S. congressman, and Carl Stokes, mayor of Cleveland) and served in the Humphrey for President campaign in 1968.

Jackson also drew from Black political operatives to form the core of his staff. Ernest Green, former Undersecretary of Labor in the Carter administration, was a top-level political adviser, as was Lamont Goodwin, another former official in the Carter administration. Preston Love, the deputy campaign manager, was an aide to Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and had served in the Harold Washington campaign. Finally, there was Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, who served as national campaign chairman. Hatcher played a



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Chicanos rally for Jackson in Los Angeles.



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Many sectors of the peace movement supported Jackson. On October 13, 1984, Jackson marched with 30,000 in Chicago for peace and justice.

seminal role in Black electoral politics as the co-chair along with Amiri Baraka of the 1972 Black Political Assembly.

Numerous ministers had access to the inner circle. Bishop H.H. Brookins of the African Methodist Church was another of Jackson's close confidants.

Black nationalists were also part of the campaign, represented on the left by the Rev. Herbert Daughtry, leader of the National Black United Front, and on the right by Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.

The Jackson campaign included a very varied group of individuals from the worlds of business, politics and religion, but it was led by the candidate, Jesse L. Jackson. Jackson has historically represented the interests of the Black petty bourgeoisie (Black professionals, small merchants, businessmen, ministers) and the national wing of the Black bourgeoisie (Black capitalists). Both classes suffer national oppression at the hands of the white monopoly capitalists, who block the Black capitalists from consolidating and expanding their control of the Black economy and who prevent the Black petty bourgeoisie from advancing beyond a middle-level status. The national wing of the Black bourgeoisie sees advancing its interest by leading the mass movement to remove the legal and social restrictions that discriminate against all Black people. Without the support of the African American workers, the national wing of the Black bourgeoisie would have little bargaining power with the white monopoly capitalists. At different times, this sector of the Black bourgeoisie objectively fights against monopoly capitalism and can play a positive role. Jackson has always favored the development of Black capitalism as a means of solving the economic oppression of African Americans. The purpose of Operation Breadbasket, a project of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and later PUSH, was to bring corporate investments into the ghettos to enable Black people to "raise themselves by their own bootstraps." Later, Jackson became recognized for negotiating economic covenants with major corporations by using the threat of a Black consumer boycott to pressure corporations to establish hiring and training programs for African Americans. While these efforts brought some jobs to the poor and publicized the plight of the Black ghetto, these programs, in themselves, were inadequate to meet the fundamental problems.

In the course of the campaign, Jackson expanded his political vision and addressed a broad agenda, which encompassed domestic and foreign policy. In many ways, he took his followers, especially his inner circle of ministers, into new

territory as he linked issues such as unemployment with overseas investment, the environmental issues with the nuclear arms race, and so on.

The campaign takes off

Jackson's stature as a serious presidential contender skyrocketed with his January visit to Syria, which won the release of Navy flier Lt. Robert Goodman. The trip demonstrated Jackson's ability to negotiate at the international level, but most importantly bore out the validity of his foreign policy views. By stressing dialogue and fair play to all nations in the Middle East, Jackson proved that the U.S. did not have to be locked into an adversarial relationship with the Arab nations. Millions of people were exposed to Jackson's message of peace and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to a homeland. The dramatic release of Lt. Goodman opened the way for a more serious and sympathetic examination of Jackson's views, especially by white people.

At this point, Jackson began winning more white support in opinion polls. In February, the *Boston Globe's* poll of New Hampshire voters placed Jackson with 16% of the vote in a state where Black people are only one percent of the population.

Jackson stood head and shoulders above the other candidates on the peace issue. Jackson's platform called for no first use of nuclear weapons, a stand the other candidates were unwilling to take, although they claimed the mantle of peace candidates. Jackson opposed the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, the neutron bomb and deployment of the Pershing and cruise missiles in Western Europe. Alone among the candidates, Jackson called for a 20-25% cut in the military budget.

Jackson also linked the issue of peace to the fight for social justice, specifically the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. "I aim to help elect 10,000 candidates to local, state and congressional office through the registration of disaffected voters, reform party rules that keep minority and female candidates away from the reins of power, and enforcement of the Voting Rights Act," said Jackson in a position statement on arms control. "In this and the mid-term election (1986), if I am successful in this strategy, we will shake boll weevils and other conservatives out and bring in members of a Rainbow Coalition committed to peace, an end to rampant military growth, and a reordering of national priorities." Jackson's peace plank was enthusiastically

UNITY PHOTO: JOHN OTA



March in Wrightsville, Georgia, for justice and dignity.



Jackson and freed pilot
Robert Goodman.

*Though 53% of
all African
Americans live
in the South,
there are only 2
Black congress-
people from the
South.*

received in the Black community, which clearly saw that tax monies saved on obsolete missiles could be spent on jobs, education and health programs. His strategy also gave peace activists a way to actually accomplish long-sought goals such as passing the nuclear freeze.

The New England races

Jackson emphasized foreign policy in the New England races, as he targeted the white liberal vote. Jackson spoke out strongly against military intervention in the third world, protested the use of U.S. troops in Central America and the funding of contra forces to subvert the Nicaraguan government. Jackson's defense policy statement declared, "We should not — indeed cannot afford to — defend illegitimate regimes from their own people. Our long-term strategic interests are undermined by tying our nation to commitments to a Marcos in the Philippines, a Zia ul Haq in Pakistan, or a Somoza in Nicaragua . . . We should seek to stand with the poor and needy, rather than with the greedy or the corrupt."

Jackson's call for the removal of more than 350 U.S. firms doing business with South Africa and a prohibition on new investments by U.S. corporations also drew support in the Black community and among white progressives. Jackson's positions and their popular acceptance forced the other candidates towards more progressive positions. Mondale, for example, finally made a statement on April 5 that called for a cutoff of new investments by U.S. firms in South Africa if there was no progress in ending human rights violations. This example was typical of what occurred as the other candidates had to move to the left in order to keep up with Jackson. Jackson's positions, characterized by conservative commentators as radical, were being accepted by many people in the U.S. and showed that people were ready for a sharp alternative to Reagan.

In this early phase of the campaign, Jackson's outreach to white liberals paid off with surprisingly good showings. In Iowa, the first caucus, with little organizing and only a two percent Black population, Jackson won three percent of the vote. Jackson's strong showing stunned Glenn, who had spent millions of dollars, only to beat Jackson narrowly. In New Hampshire, Jackson won eight percent of the vote even though Black people are only one percent of the population. In Maine's caucus, Jackson beat Glenn and came in fourth behind McGovern.

Just as Jackson was beginning to make inroads among white liberals, the Hymie controversy was whipped up by the

media. Jackson's ethnic slur against Jews reflected his nationalist tendencies and his petty bourgeois class background. But while others in U.S. politics have made racist remarks like Jimmy Carter's "ethnic purity" statement or Ernest Holling's characterization of Latinos as "wetbacks," they were not pilloried as much as Jackson. Following Jackson's apology, the media continued to fan up the controversy, aiming to drive a wedge between whites and Afro-Americans. Jackson's small but growing white support declined as weak-hearted white liberals switched over to Hart, who projected himself as a Kennedyesque liberal, while also making hawkish noises about strengthening the military.

Jackson's Southern victories

Following this promising but rocky beginning, the Jackson campaign really took off with major victories on Super Tuesday (March 13) and Super Saturday (March 17). As Jackson entered the Southern races, his showing improved with the support of the Black masses. On Super Tuesday, Jackson beat Glenn and McGovern in Florida, Rhode Island and Georgia, and came in a strong third in those states. Most importantly, Jackson demonstrated his ability to win the majority of the Black vote, despite campaigning by Black leaders such as Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington, Coretta Scott King, and Detroit Mayor Coleman Young. Jackson won 63% of the Black vote in Georgia, 54% in Alabama, and 51% in Florida.

On Super Saturday, Jackson did even better. He won the caucus in South Carolina with 34% of the vote and won the Mississippi caucus. Jackson came in second to Mondale in Kentucky.

Jackson's victories and solid support among Black voters showed their deep identification with the Jackson campaign as an expression of the fight for democracy and freedom. Not even the accommodationist Black Mondale surrogates, many of whom are tied to the ruling class via foundation money or to the Democratic Party establishment, could turn the masses away from Jackson. Jackson did especially well among rural Black people and among poor and young Black people.

Jackson's victories in the South were significant demonstrations of the power of the Black vote. Jackson's popular votes in South Carolina and Mississippi far exceeded Reagan's 11,000-vote margin of victory in the 1980 election.

The enthusiasm of Black voters was unquestionable. Black voter turnout rose to unprecedented levels. In Geor-

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March for Jackson before the April 3 New York primary.

gia, Black voter turnout was 40–50% in contrast to 28% statewide. Because of the high turnout, Georgia Black people, who constitute 20.6% of the state's registered voters, accounted for 34% of the vote, according to exit polls. In Alabama, Black people are 22.5% of the voters but accounted for 35% of the vote. Black voter turnout, combined with declining white registration, could spell an end to the Republican victories in the South. (See charts a and b)

The size and concentration of the Black vote in the South made it strategic both for the Jackson candidacy and for the overall struggle for self-determination for the African American Nation in the Black-belt South. Voter registration campaigns and the thrust for Black empowerment push forward the mobilization of the masses and fuel the demands for greater and greater democracy. This is a direct challenge to the ruling class, which has long depended upon a small Black electorate (imposed by voting restrictions) and dilution of the Black vote to enforce plantation politics. Of the estimated 17.8 million African Americans of voting age, 41% are not registered to vote. Nearly 675,000 Black people registered between 1980 and June 1984, a tremendous increase. An additional two million Black voters was the targeted goal for fall 1984.

After the March races, Jackson continued to win the Black vote and increased his margin of victory. In Illinois, Jackson won 79% of the Black vote and came in first in Chicago with 41% of the total vote. On April 3, Jackson won 80% of the Black vote in the New York primary. Jackson came in second in New York City with 33% of the vote and

came within two percentage points of beating Hart for second place. Jackson won the popular vote in Philadelphia with 77% of the vote, despite Black Mayor Wilson Goode's endorsement of Mondale. In addition, Jackson continued to do well in the South. He won the Virginia caucus and placed second in Texas.

Despite these victories in the popular vote, Jackson continued to be denied his fair share of delegates. Under the Democratic Party rules, Jackson had to receive 20-30% of the vote in a congressional or legislative district and statewide in order to qualify for delegates. Although Jackson had won 22% of the popular vote, he only had about 7% of the delegates.

Jackson continued to protest this injustice to party leaders, who in some states made adjustments to add Jackson delegates. In the end, Jackson received no just settlement, only the assurance that Jackson supporters could participate in a new Fairness Commission which will set the ground rules for the 1988 elections.

Building the Rainbow Coalition

In the middle phase of the campaign, momentum towards building the Rainbow Coalition picked up. In New York, Jackson won 34% of the Latino vote and 20% of the Asian American vote. Grass-roots organizing accounted for these strong showings. Jackson won support in these communities by speaking out on issues which affected Third World people: jobs, racial violence, protection of immigrants, non-intervention in the third world. Unlike other candidates, Jackson stayed in the ghettos and barrios to dramatize the conditions of the people through the eyes of the oppressed.

Jackson won support among Native Americans and Chicanos in Arizona, where he won 14% of the vote. Arizona has a 3% Black population.

The Rainbow elicited more support from white peace activists as well. In response to the enthusiastic reception among progressives, Jackson's positions became more progressive. The masses were open to progressive ideas; indeed they demanded to hear more specific programs to flesh out his agenda. Jackson's points became sharper and more specific, and his rhetoric against Reagan blew hotter. Jackson called Reagan a "warmonger" to wild affirmation. Appealing to peace activists in Wisconsin, Jackson declared that if elected, he would immediately impose a six-month freeze on arms development. By sharpening his agenda, Jackson clearly established himself as the peace candidate.

UNITY PHOTO



Jackson at rally in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.



UNITY PHOTO: AL LAWRENCE

Farmers supporting Jackson at Democratic Convention.

Jackson's goal was not simply to win the nomination but to present a political agenda that could rally African Americans, and form the core of a new, multi-national progressive movement.

In Pennsylvania, Jackson also picked up support from white steel workers. Although it was little publicized, Jackson won Homestead, Pennsylvania, where he was endorsed by Ron Weisen, president of Local 1397 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). Only a handful of labor unions — District 1199 of the Hospital Workers in New York City, the Alliance of Postal Employees, a Black postal workers group, the decertified Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) and other small locals — bucked AFL-CIO pressure and endorsed Jackson. But this did not mean that Jackson lacked support among workers.

Jackson carried the vote of Black workers. According to the *New York Times*/CBS News Poll of May 20, 1984, Jackson was favored by 77% of the Black union households in Illinois; 84% in New York; 80% in Pennsylvania; and 82% in Ohio. Black workers also formed local groups to support Jackson as in the case of Black bus drivers in San Francisco who formed Muni Drivers for Jackson.

Jackson offered a program of job development through large government investment to rebuild the infrastructure of the nation's roads, highways and transit systems. He called for the creation of a \$110 billion fund to be created by levying a 1-10% surtax on incomes of \$25,000 and more and by cutting the military budget.

Jackson sharpened his program for workers by adding new policies that called for new legislation to limit plant closings, aid the unemployed, and support child care, housing and nutrition programs. In addition, Jackson called for re-creation of the Job Corps and revival of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), to save the forests and watersheds.

Despite gains among Latinos, Native Americans, Chicanos, Asians, peace activists and workers, the media kept characterizing the Jackson campaign as just a Black campaign. No doubt, Jackson continued to win the Black vote, carrying 75% of that vote in Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and North Carolina. He won the Washington, D.C., primary. But Jackson had won more white votes than Hart had won non-white votes. Hart never carried more than 6% of the Black vote, while Jackson had won up to 10% or more of the white vote in some races.

The campaign moves West

In the final stretch of the campaign, Jackson continued to hammer away at Reagan and condemned Reagan's mining of the harbors of Nicaragua. The Jackson campaign was help-

ing to build the anti-Reagan front by rallying together objective allies who had yet to work together. The Jackson campaign brought disparate elements — the disabled, elderly, students and youth, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, white peace activists, rank and file trade unionists and workers, farmers — and united them into an objective alliance against Reagan. This confirmed Jackson's strategy of the Black vote being the trigger for a progressive coalition. With the support of the militant and strong 26 million-member Black Liberation Movement, all progressives stood a better chance of winning.

Throughout Jackson's California campaign, not even the media could ignore the emergence of the Rainbow Coalition. Jackson directed his energies towards pulling out a strong Latino vote, making appearances before the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), where he lost the endorsement to Mondale by just four votes, and marching in a downtown Los Angeles rally against the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill. He made historic appearances in San Francisco Chinatown and Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, where he condemned anti-Asian violence. Peace activists organized two huge rallies attended by 5,000 people for Jackson in Berkeley and Los Angeles.

In the weeks before the California primary, Jackson made two trips to Mexico to highlight his concern for a humane immigration policy toward Mexican and Central American immigrants and to lend his support to the Contadora efforts for a negotiated settlement of the war in El Salvador. Following the primary election, Jackson toured Nicaragua, El Salvador



Rally for Jackson and against racist Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill in Los Angeles.



UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

On the floor of the Democratic Convention.

and Cuba, and met with leaders in the region. Jackson called for the end of U.S. intervention in Central America and the renewal of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Jackson ended the primary season with strong showings in California and New Jersey. Although California has only a 7% Black population, Jackson won 21.4% of the vote. He carried the four predominantly Black congressional districts and won over 20% of the vote in 11 congressional districts. Jackson won 20% of the Asian American vote, 17% of the Latino vote and 15% of the white vote, his highest percentage among whites during the primaries. In New Jersey, Jackson won 24% of the vote, and 12% in New Mexico, where Black people are 2% of the population.

By the end of the campaign, Jackson had succeeded even beyond his initial expectations. He won 3.5 million votes. He won in 60 congressional districts, 30 of them in the South. He entered the Democratic National Convention with 391 delegates and won 465.5 delegate votes on the night of the nomination. He had built the foundation for a nationwide organization of progressive political activists and supporters.

Most importantly, the Jackson campaign galvanized the revolutionary democratic sentiments of the African American masses and pushed forward the struggle for Black liberation. This struggle for democracy and political power objectively attacks the monopoly capitalists. The strengthening of the Black united front through the Jackson campaign and its expansion to a multinational united front via the Rainbow Coalition brings together in an embryonic form the strategic

alliance needed to overthrow monopoly capitalism.

By galvanizing the Black vote and moving the electorate to the left, the Jackson campaign has greatly advanced the working class movement. The Jackson movement's basic thrust for greater democracy and Black self-determination is a revolutionary democratic motion.

By articulating a progressive platform, Jackson raised political issues not usually discussed in national politics. The presidential race provided a national forum on these issues, legitimizing them in an unprecedented way. Jackson also raised people's political consciousness about the absence of democracy in this country, whether by the example of the Democratic Party's unfair delegate selection rules or by the discriminatory violations of the Voting Rights Act in the South.

As the Rainbow Coalition maintains its independence as a voice for progressive change, it will continue to attract new activists, forge new alliances and deepen the existing unity among its diverse elements. Building multinational unity around a democratic program for political representation and social justice is an expressed goal of the Rainbow Coalition. The Rainbow Coalition, driven by the revolutionary democratic demands of the African American masses, can become a powerful weapon against the ruling class.

Lessons from the Jackson campaign

One of the key lessons brought out by the Jackson campaign is the importance of electoral politics as a platform for progressive ideas. The Jackson campaign thrust to the forefront of U.S. politics the demands of the Black Liberation Movement and in the process showed how the electoral arena could be transformed into a vehicle for revolutionary, mass struggle.

The Jackson campaign also exposed the absence of democracy in the political process. As one of the major capitalist parties, the Democrats showed that they had no interest in respecting the democratic sentiments of the voters. The politics of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are controlled by the monopoly capitalists, who select the eventual nominees. The Jackson campaign revealed the hypocrisy of the Democratic Party. There was never any fairness to the presidential race. The ground rules of the campaign — the scheduling of races in rapid succession, the predominance of caucuses instead of primaries, the provisions for the appointment of party and elected officials as delegates — all favored the bosses' hand-picked candidate, Walter Mondale. Thus,

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Election day in Seattle.

having won only 39% of the popular vote during the primaries and caucuses, Mondale was able to garner 51% of the delegates and dictate policy over the platform, rules and credentials.

The Democratic Party can become a vehicle to raise progressive politics, as was shown by the Jackson campaign, but it will be a very difficult struggle to alter the Democratic Party's center-right orientation. As was demonstrated at the Democratic National Convention, where Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition were defeated on three out of four minority reports to the platform, the conservative forces are much stronger than the progressive forces. In order for real change in the Democratic Party, the progressive forces would have to oust the Southern conservatives and the right-wing Zionist lobby (a major financial backer of the Democrats). In order to wage this struggle, several factors would have to come into play. First, the liberal section of the Democrats would have to accept the Jackson forces and unite. This did not happen at the Democratic Convention because various liberal leaders in the nuclear freeze and women's caucuses, as well as some Black leaders, tied their own personal aspirations to the conservative party establishment. Secondly, there would need to be a concerted struggle at the lower levels of the Democratic Party, at the state and county level, by the Jackson and progressive forces, to win party positions. Even with these goals accomplished, there would need to be a clear political alternative offered by the Jackson forces which could rally new elements to the Democratic Party and could become a platform



UNITY PHOTO

Voters of all nationalities rallied to Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition.

for the progressives.

Future directions for the Rainbow

Jackson's decision to work within the Democratic Party, while keeping his independence by organizing the Rainbow Coalition to do grass-roots organizing, is based on a sober assessment that the Black masses are not headed in the direction of a third party. It will take a major defection of workers and minorities from the Democrats to form a viable third party. For most African Americans, the Democrats are the only party in which it is even possible to win some influence and recognition. However, in order not to be taken for granted, Jackson and the Rainbow must keep an independent organization, which can, if necessary, challenge the Democratic establishment by offering its own slate of candidates and issues. By bringing new elements into the Democratic Party under his leadership, Jackson could wield real clout.

Progressives and communists must support Jackson's bid for greater influence in the Democratic Party, while wholeheartedly aiding his efforts for independent political organizing at the grass-roots level. In the long protracted struggle for socialism, the Jackson forces' fight for democracy advances the goal of socialist revolution by forcing the ruling class to grant higher and higher levels of democracy. In preparation for the crucial fall election, Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition launched voter registration and voter education efforts. After declaring his support for the Mondale/Ferraro ticket, Jackson made numerous appearances in the South to encourage a new Black/white coalition that can unite to elect Black people to Congress, establish a new economic agenda that can aid African Americans and whites, and to win for Mondale and the Democrats. Each state's Rainbow Coalition was encouraged to organize get-out-the-vote efforts.

Beyond November lie even greater challenges for the Rainbow Coalition. Many Rainbow Coalition members are active in the Dump Koch movement in New York City. Similarly, Rainbow Coalition members will be organizing for other local races and even running for office in the near future. The progressive challenge represented by the Rainbow Coalition has great potential because it is a movement rooted among the masses and guided by high political principles. Its future is limited only by its ability to coalesce around a functional organizational structure which combines democracy with centralized leadership and the further articulation of a progressive alternative in U.S. politics.

UNITY PHOTO: LOUISE MARTIN



Jackson addressed this Mondale rally in Atlanta just before the election.

chart a

Black Voter

Rank by number of unregistered blacks	State	Unregistered black voting- age population
1	New York*	894,000
2	Texas	520,000
3	North Carolina*	506,000
4	Georgia	472,000
5	California	462,000
6	Florida	459,000
7	Virginia*	331,000
8	Pennsylvania	294,000
9	South Carolina*	292,000
10	Alabama*	272,000
11	Illinois	257,000
12	Maryland	256,000
13	Louisiana*	256,000
14	New Jersey	247,000
15	Ohio	247,000
16	Michigan	214,000
17	Tennessee*	158,000
18	District of Columbia	149,000
19	Mississippi*	131,000
20	Arkansas*	85,000
21	Indiana	84,000
22	Missouri	79,000
23	Connecticut	68,000
24	Massachusetts*	64,000
25	Kentucky*	62,000
26	Oklahoma	56,000
27	Wisconsin	13,000

Source: Joint Center for Political Studies.

* In these states, the number of unregistered voting-age blacks in 1982 exceeded the Republican margin of victory in the 1980 presidential election.

** Because all numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand, some numbers in this column do not equal the sum of numbers in the two preceding columns.

Registration - 1982

Registered black voting- age population	Total black voting-age population**	Percentage of voting- age blacks registered	Reagan victory margin, 1980
737,000	1,631,000	45.2	165,459
678,000	1,198,000	56.6	629,558
391,000	897,000	43.6	39,383
510,000	982,000	51.9	-236,787
836,000	1,298,000	64.4	1,441,183
464,000	923,000	50.3	627,476
383,000	714,000	53.6	237,435
426,000	720,000	59.2	324,332
333,000	625,000	53.3	11,456
372,000	644,000	57.7	17,462
819,000	1,077,000	76.1	376,681
407,000	664,000	61.4	-45,555
557,000	813,000	68.5	84,400
363,000	610,000	59.5	399,193
470,000	717,000	65.6	454,131
553,000	767,000	72.1	253,693
322,000	479,000	67.1	4,710
171,000	320,000	53.5	-102,611
410,000	541,000	75.8	11,808
147,000	233,000	63.3	5,123
182,000	265,000	68.5	411,459
260,000	339,000	76.7	142,999
75,000	143,000	52.3	135,478
86,000	149,000	57.3	2,423
114,000	176,000	64.9	17,857
82,000	138,000	59.2	293,544
97,000	111,000	87.9	107,261

chart b

Southern Voter

White Registration

State	1980	1984	Change
Alabama	1,700,000	1,664,000	-36,000
Arkansas	1,056,000	964,000	-92,000
Florida	4,331,000	4,337,000	+ 6,000
Georgia	1,800,000	1,787,000	-13,000
Louisiana	1,550,000	1,609,000	+ 59,000
Mississippi	1,152,000	1,144,000	-8,000
North Carolina	2,314,000	2,369,000	+ 55,000
South Carolina	916,000	848,000	-68,000
Tennessee	2,200,000	2,082,000	-118,000
Texas	6,020,000	6,042,000	+ 22,000
Virginia	1,942,000	1,908,000	-34,000
Total	24,981,000	24,754,000	-227,000

Source: Data from *American Political Report*, May 18, 1984.
Some data from the Voter Education Project.

Registration, 1980-84

Black Registration

1980	1984	Change
350,000	482,000	+ 132,000
130,000	155,000	+ 25,000
489,000	517,000	+ 28,000
450,000	512,000	+ 62,000
465,000	535,000	+ 70,000
330,000	406,000	+ 76,000
440,000	565,000	+ 125,000
320,000	331,000	+ 11,000
300,000	348,000	+ 48,000
620,000	720,000	+ 100,000
360,000	378,000	+ 18,000
4,254,000	4,949,000	+ 695,000

Party Building and the Left Today

UNITY PHOTO



An Interview with William Gallegos of the U.S. League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

The League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) recently concluded its second national congress and held forums throughout the country to present its views. In the course of these programs a number of interesting questions were posed about important issues facing Marxism-Leninism and the left in the United States. In the following interview, William Gallegos, writing for the League, discusses some of these.

Gallegos responds to questions specifically asked of the League as well as to questions facing the general left in the U.S. His remarks about the need for unity on the left, approaches toward building this unity, and the international communist movement today are especially noteworthy.

Why did the League decide not to declare itself a vanguard communist party at its recent congress?

The congress did not consider declaring the League a vanguard party because it was clear that several important conditions did not exist which would have allowed for such an important step.

From its founding in 1978, the League has held that building a new vanguard communist party is the central task of the organization. We believe it is imperative to forge a genuine party of the working class in this country if we are ever to end the rule of monopoly capital. The degeneration of the Communist Party USA into revisionism in the 1950s left the struggle without a party that could provide revolutionary leadership. We believe that communists at this stage in the struggle must set as their main objective and task the formation of a genuine Marxist-Leninist vanguard communist party.

But forging such a party is not simple. It is not just making a declaration.

This interview represents the views of the Central Committee of the U.S. League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).



Black Solidarity Day march, New York, 1979.

The League believes that three broad tasks must be completed to create the conditions for forming this party. The first of these tasks is the development of a revolutionary line for the struggle for socialism in the U.S. through the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the U.S. The second is the integration of communists with vital sectors of the working class and people's movements. Lastly, a necessary task is the uniting of Marxist-Leninists into a single organization. Today, we believe particular aspects of these tasks should be emphasized in order to achieve our objective.

With regard to the development of line, we believe it is especially important now to improve our theoretical work. Revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in the U.S. must distinguish itself from revisionism by presenting a clearly differentiated line on fundamental issues facing

the struggle for socialism. Along with other Marxist-Leninists over the years we have tackled this through our newspaper, other publications and most recently our political program in which we present an overview of the socialist revolution in this country and the main demands we raise at this time to advance the struggle.

But we realize that we must deepen the development of line and have set out to answer more comprehensively vital questions such as: what will socialism look like in the U.S.? what is the relationship of the struggle for national liberation, especially Black and Chicano liberation, to the struggle for socialism? what happened to socialism in the Soviet Union? what is the situation in the Eastern European countries? and what is our view of the development of socialism in China?

We have preliminary views on all

We believe that communists at this stage in the struggle must set as their main objective the formation of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

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Cannery workers, Hawai'i.

these issues, but we must develop our analysis and show that Marxism-Leninism can comprehensively answer these questions and point out the way forward.

Secondly, we have set out to try vigorously to expand Marxism-Leninism in the working class, especially the lower stratum of the working class, those who are most oppressed and exploited. We believe this sector is most receptive to revolutionary ideas and is the key to the development of a socialist trend throughout the entire working class. Any future vanguard party must have extensive ties with the working class and cannot be like so many other left groups that are mainly middle class or student in composition and in base.

Lastly, we hope to continue to try to unite with Marxist-Leninists, but we have to go about this differently than in the past. The disintegration of the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CPML) and the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWH), among other groups, were major setbacks to the communist movement in the U.S. At one time, we had high hopes to unite with these forces, but that was not to be.

Today the League wishes to unite Marxist-Leninists by improving our ties with the remnants of the organizations that have disintegrated and the individual communists who remain scattered throughout the country. All Marxist-Leninists should find practical ways to improve their working relations and resolve their differences. We hope all Marxist-Leninists can unite to strengthen our ties, place small differences in the perspective of the immense tasks before us, constructively struggle out problems, and keep in mind the urgent responsibility we have to forge a genuinely revolutionary trend in



Boston demonstration against Reagan's policies, 1982.

We have set out to try to vigorously expand Marxism-Leninism in the working class, especially the lower stratum of the working class.

the U.S.

If the League and other Marxist-Leninists work diligently to accomplish the above ends, the formation of a new communist party will be much closer. We in the League realize that we are now the only intact, functioning anti-revisionist communist organization in the U.S. today, and this places great responsibilities upon us. All revolutionaries, however, must seriously ponder the consequences if we are unable to combine our efforts against the growing danger of war and the rightward move of the bourgeoisie.

What is your view of developments in the international communist movement?

Hu Yao-bang, chairman of the Communist Party of China, made an observation which we think addresses this

question. He said last year:

“For more than three decades since World War II, the world communist movement has followed a tortuous course of development. It has scored magnificent successes and victories, but has also experienced severe setbacks and failures, undergoing a bewildering process of turbulence and division. This complex historical phenomenon has given rise to a wide variety of reactions throughout the world. Some people have gloated over the setbacks, whereas others have lost their confidence, describing Marxism as being in a state of “crisis.” However, amidst such shouts of “crisis,” the Marxist parties and organizations of many countries, braving all kinds of attacks, have heroically and calmly carried on the fight. In the tortuous course of development all true Marxists and farsighted people are discerning a most essential positive fac-

tor, i.e. politically and ideologically more and more Marxist parties and organizations have dared to break with blind faith, to emancipate their minds and to think for themselves, thus becoming able independently to integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the revolution and their own countries.” (Speech commemorating the centennial of the death of Karl Marx, March 13, 1983)

Our own experience in the United States over the past six years confirms what Comrade Hu said about the twists and turns of the revolution. Since the founding of the League in 1978 there have been complex developments in the world Marxist-Leninist movement. In the late 1970s the situation in China was still unsettled after the defeat of the Gang of Four, and this caused some confusion. The betrayal of the revolu-

tion in Viet Nam, with its expulsion of the “boat people” and its hegemonist actions against Laos and Kampuchea, and the costly errors of the communists in Kampuchea (the forced evacuation of cities, abolition of money and the killing of many who disagreed with the path of the revolution) tarnished the prestige of world socialism.

The Soviet Union also increased its imperialist activity in the late 1970s. It invaded Afghanistan, backed the aggression in Indochina, and helped suppress the workers’ movement in Poland. These developments seriously affected the international communist movement, caused turbulence and division, and sharpened some of the theoretical and practical questions of socialist construction, socialist democracy, the role of the party, and the right of self-determination.

Influenced by these developments, as

The Soviet Union is an imperialist superpower vying with the U.S. for world domination.



Soviet tanks on the move in Afghanistan.

of their own countries, showing the correctness of the principle that each Marxist party and organization must be responsible for solving the problems of their own revolution. Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations are continuing to struggle and work in many countries such as Peru, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Trinidad/Tobago, the Philippines, Turkey, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Haiti, Argentina, Greece, Holland, Australia, Belgium, Britain, Norway, Canada, as well as in the U.S.

We believe the path forward remains tortuous and we will see advances as well as defeats, but many of those groups that weathered the storm these past couple of years and the new groups, which are emerging from the struggle, seem to have a more down-to-earth attitude. We hope that the international Marxist-Leninist movement is now on the verge of making important headway once again.

What is your view of the situation of the general left in this country today?

The left in the U.S. is still quite weak and has been adversely affected these

past several years by the activities of the two superpowers, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The move to the right by the U.S. ruling class has both demoralized sectors of the left as well as inspired the hatred of imperialism by many others. Paradoxically, we have seen a weakening of the left and a strengthening of the potential for the left.

By weakening of the left I am referring to the disintegration of the CPML and other Marxist-Leninist organizations that trace their roots to the 1960s. Of course other organizations, in addition to Marxist-Leninist ones, disintegrated in the past period, but we believe that the setbacks suffered by the Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. led to a situation where, relatively speaking, revisionism has had a minor resurgence. Today, unfortunately, we have to say that within the revolutionary left, revisionism and centrism are relatively stronger than Marxism-Leninism. This is not coincidental with the relative weakness of the left in the U.S. Whatever the weaknesses of the Marxist-Leninist organizations — and there were many — the period when Marxism-Leninism was relatively stronger in the left was when the left had the most impact on U.S.

Paradoxically, we have seen a weakening of the left and a strengthening of the potential for the left.

well as other external factors such as the economic crisis, political conservatism, and the lull in the mass movement in the capitalist world, a number of Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations in North America and Western Europe experienced great difficulties in the late 1970s, with some of them dissolving or collapsing. These included the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist and the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters in the U.S., the Workers Communist Party in Canada, and the Communist Party of Germany. These were great setbacks for the revolution in those countries and the international communist movement.

While external factors adversely affected these parties, internal contradictions were the cause of their failures. Each of these parties and organizations had their own particularities, but there were certain common characteristics. They were young organizations that were relatively inexperienced and immature in their grasp of Marxism. Their leadership primarily consisted of intellectuals from the petty bourgeoisie, possessing an ideological weakness of not grasping well the importance of applying Marxism to the concrete conditions. Many of these leaders also had tendencies of self-glorification, arrogance and sectarianism. They were not able to keep their bearings, correct their errors and adjust their tactics according to changes in the objective conditions. They were also not able to counteract within their organizations the influences of the growing rightist and conservative atmosphere in capitalist society. The collapse of these parties and organizations is not, as some believe, proof of the "failure" of Marxism. Rather, this phenomenon was due to the succumbing of a sector of the anti-revisionist communist movement to petty bourgeois ideological weaknesses

While external factors adversely affected the Marxist-Leninist parties that dissolved, internal contradictions were the cause of their failures.

and an inability to deepen the application of Marxism.

We agree with Comrade Hu that a most positive factor has emerged from the turbulence of the recent period: more Marxists are seeing the importance of thinking for themselves and making an independent application of Marxism to the concrete conditions of the revolution in their own countries. There is evidence for confidence and optimism, not demoralization or pessimism.

In other countries around the world, Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations have deepened the understanding

The left must avoid sectarianism and find ways to work constructively in the immediate struggle.

UNITY PHOTO



Seattle demonstration against Reagan policies in El Salvador, 1982.

mindedness is imperative. The entire left must seek ways to work together to advance the mass movement.

There are a variety of different forces in the U.S., including Marxist-Leninist, revisionist, social democratic, anarchist and pacifist. All of these forces on the left have their differences with one another, and the ideological distinctions are quite basic. Yet all the left forces also share the common feature of being active in the people's movements and say they are committed to the interests of the people against monopoly capitalism.

Ways must be found to strengthen the ability of left forces to work in common in concrete struggles for the benefit of the people. Not to do so only helps the reactionary ruling class.

Too often, left forces spend an inordinate amount of time trying to exclude, block or expel other left forces from coalitions or struggles. This is wrong, because the left should devote its primary attention to advancing the interests of whatever struggle they are involved in. The League's attitude is that the left must avoid sectarianism and find ways to work constructively in the immediate struggle.

Red baiting, physical intimidation and rumor mongering against other left groups should not take place.

Differences over ideological and political matters will continue to exist, and the appropriate ways to handle these are through the press, forums, and debates in journals and pamphlets. The resolution of these differences will take some time, if ever, to resolve, but these methods must be used in the interests of the people's movements.

Here is another example. In some work opposing U.S. intervention in Central America, some have raised that eve-

More Marxists are seeing the importance of thinking for themselves and making an independent application of Marxism to the conditions in their own country.

UNITY PHOTO: ÓSCAR RÍOS



A coalition of left organizations has cooperated to build the people's movement in Peru.

politics.

There is no way that the revolutionary left will gain any credibility in the U.S. when revolutionary politics are linked to the defense of Soviet aggression. Fortunately, as the mass movement steps up and more forces become open to and join the left, revisionist and centrist views face more challenges.

During the past two years or so we have seen new forces becoming involved. The mass sentiment against the arms race, U.S. intervention in Central America, nuclear power, environmental pollution, and racism and repression has broadly expanded. Unprecedentedly large demonstrations have been conducted to protest these evils of monopoly capitalism. We are witnessing an emergence of many new activists out of these movements. The Jackson candidacy, especially, brought together many of these elements and attracted

over 20% of the popular vote in the Democratic primary. The Jackson candidacy has been one of the most exciting political developments in years and is of profound significance for the left. The potential for the expansion of the left is growing.

So we see that while the situation in the left today is complex, there is the beginning of a resurgence.

What is the League's view of the future of the left in this country and its tasks?

As I have said above, there are great potentials as well as dangers ahead. In order for the left to grow as a force and realize its potential, we think an important objective must be a clearer understanding of its goals in the minds of the U.S. masses. In addition the breaking down of sectarianism and narrow-

***United action* will not be easily achieved, but common ground can be found. The people's movements demand nothing less.**

ryone involved in the work must support Cuba. If one does not support Cuba one cannot work in that movement. This principle was raised to try to obstruct people who were critical of Cuban policy.

This approach is wrong and sectarian. It actively excludes many from being involved because of issues *peripheral* to the support of the people of Central America. It transforms the movement from an inclusionary one, one that tries to build as much opposition as possible to U.S. intervention in Central America, into an exclusionary one where issues other than Central America are used to define who can and who cannot be involved.

In contrast, we believe there are some important lessons to be learned from the efforts of Marxist-Leninists and other left forces in other countries who are seeking ways to join together in practical struggle, despite their considerable ideological differences. In Peru this past year a united left coalition formed to conduct electoral work. This coalition worked out a common program and included the revisionist party of Peru, two Marxist-Leninist organizations, the social democrats and some mass organizations. This coalition succeeded in forging a strong left presence in the elections, far greater than any of the indi-

vidual organizations could ever muster. In the mayoral races this united left coalition swept seven races including Lima, the capital of the country. This was a significant and noteworthy victory.

A similar approach was adopted by the left forces in the Dominican Republic. They played a major role in the upheaval around the increase in food prices in that country.

The League proposes that the left in the U.S. adopt a similar attitude here. *United action* will not be easily achieved because of the outstanding conflicts and historical differences, but common ground can be found. The people's movements demand nothing less.

The League has a policy to work cooperatively with all other left groups, including the Communist Party USA and the Democratic Socialists of America. It is especially important at this time to have more unity on the left to strengthen the struggle against the policies of the Reagan administration and the necessity to oppose further U.S. intervention in Central America.

What is the League's view of China and what is your relationship to China?

We support the efforts of the Chinese people and the Communist

Party of China to construct socialism. We believe China's foreign policy is a policy which promotes peace and supports the struggles of the oppressed for liberation. China's foreign policy is an independent policy that opposes both superpowers.

We also maintain that the construction of socialism in China is the responsibility of the Chinese, just as the revolution in any country is the responsibility of the people of that country. Individuals and groups in other countries should refrain from making pronouncements on the efforts of Marxist-Leninists of other countries. We believe this is an important matter that must be recognized if the revolution in any country is to succeed and internationalism truly respected.

We do not endorse everything that China says or does — we do not believe revolutionaries in this country should

even approach the question of China in this way, feeling compelled to judge policies and the twists and turns of the struggle. We do not know the concrete conditions in China. Furthermore, the construction of socialism is a long historical process, filled inevitably with many ups and downs. The Chinese revolution is evidence of this. By the admission of the Chinese comrades, grievous errors have been made at times since 1949, but the march toward communism continues. Marxist-Leninists must take the long view in assessing this new historical stage we call socialism.

We have opinions about different policies and decisions the Chinese have made. For example, we did not think that removing the right to strike from the constitution was justified according to the reasons the Chinese gave. Nevertheless, we continue to respect the Chinese comrades' efforts to construct so-

Romania has pursued an independent foreign policy.



We maintain that the construction of socialism in China is the responsibility of the Chinese.

cialism according to Chinese conditions and do not make our opinions about China major issues.

In a like way we believe the Chinese respect the efforts of the communists of each country to carry out their revolutions according to their own experiences and conditions. The Chinese do not interfere in the internal affairs of other parties and the revolutions in other countries. This attitude sharply contrasts with that of the Soviet party, which maintains it is the “father” party in the international communist movement with the right to make pronouncements and even military interventions in the affairs of others.

The League disagrees with the CPUSA on many points of line on the U.S. revolution. However, we also maintain that when possible we will work with the CPUSA on concrete struggles. These stands we take are independent of our view of the Soviet Union, and we would hope that one day the CPUSA might adopt a similar stand.

The League is an independent communist organization that places as its fundamental goal and reason for existence the winning of socialism in the U.S. We are not subsidized by any foreign group or power — we do not take a single penny from China, the Communist Party of China, or any other foreign force. We make our decisions based upon our own views and analyses.

Is the League “Maoist”?

We are not Maoists and we have never called ourselves Maoists.

Mao Zedong was an outstanding Marxist-Leninist, and his example and writings inspired many in the U.S., including many in the League today. His

The construction of socialism is a long, historical process, filled inevitably with many ups and downs.

writings form a treasure house of theoretical lessons for communists everywhere and we continue to encourage study of Comrade Mao’s writings.

But respect for Mao is different from calling ourselves Maoists. For one, we are not sure what this term means since it was the bourgeoisie that first coined this term during the Cultural Revolution during the 1960s, and today it is still mainly the bourgeoisie and the Soviet Union that use this term to refer to what they believe are ultraleftists.

In the U.S. there is the Revolutionary Communist Party that calls itself



Maoist, as does a terrorist group down in Peru called "Shining Path." While these groups may call themselves "Maoists," they really have nothing in common with the outlook promoted by Mao and are distorting Mao's legacy.

What is the League's view of the Soviet Union?

We consider it an imperialist superpower vying with the U.S. for world domination. On its domestic policy, we disagree with its lack of democracy, its discrimination against the minority nationalities and its repression of progressive dissidents.

In its foreign policy, most people recognize that the Soviet arms buildup is no different than that of the U.S. Both superpowers threaten to destroy the entire world with their mad arms race. The U.S. and U.S.S.R. hold some 94% of all the nuclear weapons in the world.

The League supports negotiations between the two superpowers to lessen world tensions. We believe the two superpowers must take the lead in the destruction and elimination of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, there seems to be little chance of any progress being made in this area in the foreseeable future. In fact, the new cold war between the two superpowers has brought

their relations to their lowest point in years. Ronald Reagan's flippant remark about "outlawing the Soviet Union" and starting bombing in "five minutes" indicates how easily the U.S. bourgeoisie considers launching World War III. Likewise, the Soviet downing of a civilian airliner killing all aboard shows how little the Soviets regard world opinion and morality.

Lastly, the League believes the history of the Soviet Union presents a complicated theoretical challenge to Marxism-Leninism. The question of what happened to socialism in the world's first socialist state is still inadequately answered. We must try to analyze what has happened in order to comprehend the recent history of the international communist movement, to help determine what the features of socialism will look like in the U.S., and to answer the many legitimate questions people have about communism when faced with the example of the Soviet Union.

What is the League's view of the Eastern European countries? of Cuba and Viet Nam?

The situation with these countries is complicated and we believe distinctions must be made among them. Yugoslavia

and Romania are quite different than the rest of the so-called Eastern bloc countries. Both Yugoslavia and Romania maintain their national independence and conduct independent foreign policies. Neither of them is occupied by Soviet forces, and both have vigorously upheld the importance of respecting national sovereignty and non-alignment in foreign affairs.

The other countries in Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Hungary, have little or no autonomy. Tens of thousands of Soviet troops occupy or are stationed on the borders of these nations. In Poland, a legitimate mass workers' movement has been suppressed by the Polish army under the encouragement of the Soviets. In our view, these countries suffer from the imperialist rule of the Soviet Union.

Cuba and Viet Nam are in yet another category. Both countries went

through many years of revolutionary struggle, and their revolutions were made by the people of these countries. Both the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions inspired millions in the U.S. and around the world, and continue to stand as symbols of successful struggle against U.S. imperialism. But the stories of Cuba and Viet Nam since their revolutions have not been so positive.

Both countries today are deeply in debt to the Soviets, owing billions of dollars to the Kremlin. Viet Nam has its own hegemonic nationalist designs to absorb Kampuchea and Laos to form a greater Indochina federation against the will of its smaller neighbors. Cuba is being used by the Soviets to intervene in the world where Soviet troops dare not go. For example, Cuba is today fighting in Ethiopia, supporting the Ethiopian government in its war against Eritrea.

However, especially in the case of Cuba, we must be clear that Cuba was forced toward Soviet domination because of hostile U.S. policies. That is why we demand, as a part of our minimum, immediate program passed at our congress, that the U.S. normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba and Viet Nam and end its economic embargo against them.

Much study remains to be done about the situation in the Eastern European countries, Viet Nam and Cuba. While it may take some time to fully interpret developments, our stand must be to continue to assess these countries by their objective roles in the world and whether or not they help advance the interests of the working class and people of their nations and uphold peace, independence and progress in world affairs. Simple answers, set formulas or self-declarations cannot be substituted for hard analyses.

The history of the Soviet Union, now an imperialist superpower, presents a complicated theoretical challenge to Marxism-Leninism.



Lessons from the Collapse of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

Carl Davidson

More than three years have passed since the breakup and disintegration of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CPML) — one of the largest and more promising organizations that united a core of revolutionaries from the upheavals of the 1960s.


At its peak the CPML had nearly a thousand active members and several thousand sympathizers. At one point, about half of its ranks came from working class origins, while the other half came from the intelligentsia and other middle strata. About one-third were from the various minority nationalities; half were men, half women.

It was a young, militant and active organization. Most members were under 35 and directly involved in mass struggle — in the trade unions, minority communities, student groups, women's organizations and other forms of political action. The CPML also included a small but important core of veterans from the communist movement of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. They provided invaluable guidance.

The CPML went through a process of organizational development. It started with the October League (OL), which itself was constituted initially by a merger of two local circles of less than 50 people. But at the CPML's peak, it had functioning districts in about 30 cities, with the districts ranging in size from a dozen to more than 100 members.

The party's press was relatively well developed. At its peak, *The Call* newspaper had a weekly circulation of 12,000 — although most were single-copy sales and not regular sub-

Carl Davidson was the editor of *Class Struggle*, CPML's theoretical journal, and a member of the Standing Committee of the CPML. He is currently a contributing editor to *UNITY* newspaper, and on the editorial board of *Forward*.



At its peak the CPML had nearly a thousand active members. Its paper, the *Call*, had a weekly circulation of 12,000.

(Facing page)
Jobs or Income Now
march in Washington,
D.C., in the late 1970s. The
CPML helped organize
JOIN.

CALL PHOTO

scribers. Liberator Press published several books and dozens of pamphlets — some selling in the tens of thousands. There was a theoretical journal with 1,500 readers.

For a new group, the CPML's basic units were also well positioned. Most units or cells were factory based and situated in basic and light industries. Growing numbers of cadres were being elected to union positions in their locals. CPML members held posts in the Black United Front and in the United League of Mississippi, in the National Lawyer's Guild and the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association, and in groups the CPML had set up, like the National Fight-back Organization and the Communist Youth Organization.

While more achievements can be pointed out, this brief accounting already underlines one key question: What happened? In the short period of about a year, all this was blown away. Many of those involved denounced what they had been doing and dropped out of political life. Why?

There are no simple or commonly agreed upon answers to these questions. What follows is not meant to be a complete history or even a thorough sum-up. Instead, it is a statement of some of the main lessons and conclusions that I have drawn and would summarize as follows:

- The CPML was destroyed by revisionism, particularly of a rightist, social democratic variety. An anti-party clique representing this viewpoint formed in the leadership and worked to disintegrate the organization. Some did so by staying inside to the end, others by resigning and intriguing from without. In the end, these misleaders all openly denounced Marxism-Leninism and called for the CPML's liquidation.



CPML 1st anniversary celebration

- The CPML was also destroyed because its leadership made some serious mistakes that were not adequately corrected. These included both flip-flops in political line and poor methods of leadership, especially in failing to practice the mass line. The leadership often made immature and one-sided assessments of conditions in the country. At times it tried rashly to “seize the leadership” of mass struggles through various campaigns. When these get-rich-quick schemes failed, they would be replaced without adequate sum-ups or self-criticisms.

- One of the main conditions setting the stage for the CPML’s liquidation was the persistence of a mainly left deviation in its program and political line. The “anti-left campaign” meant to rectify this deviation, however, was itself overblown, subjective and idealistic. In fact, it served to shield the right and hamstringing the genuine left.

- One critical destabilizing factor was the CPML’s social and historical makeup. Its leadership was young and inexperienced. The core came out of the student and youth rebellions of the 1960s, a fact giving the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie a preponderance of influence. Activists from this stratum are prone to rapid shifts from one extreme to another and historically have been the main recruiting ground for both the left social democrats and ultraleft formations. The fact that a number of those who were the most doctrinaire “leftists” in the CPML quickly transformed into social democratic activists is a case in point.

The founding congress of the CPML was a basically positive event. By that time, the organization had drawn clear lines of demarcation with the revisionists on the main points of principle and strategy. Also, dozens of local circles had been united into a single organization set up along Leninist lines. While not complete, it was a definite step forward in the process of party building.

Nonetheless, the CPML started off with serious problems. The founding congress itself was, in part, the culmination of an ill-conceived ideological battle — called the anti-Nicolaus campaign — that skewed the organization’s political analysis in the direction of ultraleftism. (Nicolaus had been a CPML leader.) While the debate often took obscure and abstract forms, several key questions stood out.

The first was over the nature and number of advanced workers in the U.S. in the 1970s. The position that won out was that there were “tens of thousands” of advanced workers “standing on our doorstep” waiting to be recruited to the CPML. This was a gross exaggeration, but it was genuinely



The Call sold up to 12,000 copies per issue.

believed and served as a rationale for a great emphasis on propaganda work.

The second was over the nature of the enemy camp. Was liberalism collapsing and the conservative right on the rise? The position that won out said no. Liberalism was viewed as the most dangerous trend.

The third was over the nature of alliances with reformists. For the most part, these alliances were to be disallowed, and the most militant reformists were to be made the “target of the main blow” in our agitation.

These mistaken assessments of conditions in the country and within the mass movements obviously had an impact on the founding documents of the CPML — its Program and Political Report. While generally correct, a careful reading will show that in every section there are also erroneous positions, policies and assessments of conditions — all in the direction of ultraleftism. Here are some examples:

- **On the trade unions:** *All* trade union officials, without regard to their level or position, are labeled as “agents of imperialism” and, together with the revisionists, the “target of the main blow.”

- **On the woman question:** Feminism is presented only as “serving the interests of imperialism,” and all feminists are attacked, without regard for the conditions or without making distinctions among them.

- **On the national question:** The middle and backward forces within the oppressed nationality united fronts are lumped together as “bourgeois elements” who “promote reforms” rather than “fight national oppression.”

- **On political parties and trends:** The strength of the CPUSA revisionists is repeatedly overstated while the social democrats are mostly ignored as irrelevant. Also, the CPML is represented as the only party that is not a defender of capitalism, ignoring actual or potential third parties, oppressed nationality parties or a labor party.

- **On socialism:** The Program asserts that “under communism, the abolition of classes makes possible the enormous development of the productive forces and the production of abundant social wealth.” Actually the converse is correct: the development of the productive forces is needed in order to abolish classes.

Successes

There were a number of events in the first year of the CPML’s life that served to minimize the negative impact of these views. One was the apparent success of a number of

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mass activities and the fact that many activists did join us in spite of our weaknesses. Another factor was our liaison work. The CPML established relations with dozens of parties in other countries, including the Communist Party of China. In the main, this work was positive and served to educate our members in internationalism. To a certain extent, however, it also served to give us an overblown conception of ourselves, leading us to think that we had achieved more than we actually had. As for other Marxist-Leninist groups in the U.S., we believed that with persistent liaison work, we would be able to unite with most of them in a single organization. The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) at this time went through a major split, which we viewed as very positive. Even though the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWH) (the split-off from the RCP) initially expressed hostility toward us, we believed that it was temporary and could be overcome.

The split in the RCP had another meaning for us. It meant, for the first time, we were now the largest multinational Marxist-Leninist organization in the country. Previously, we had been a minority in the Marxist-Leninist trend. Now we believed that if a majority of the Marxist-Leninists had not already joined with us, they would do so very soon.

It was also apparent as this first year progressed that we had many problems to overcome. Neither the mass work nor our party building efforts were growing fast enough for us. We gained only 12% in the first year, when we had hoped for much more. The Fightback work and trade union work were not taking off. In many areas our cadres had become isolated and confused.

Rectification effort

The leadership attempted to deal with this through what we called the “Three Evils Campaign” — combating subjectivism, sectarianism and bureaucracy. The main thrust of this rectification was to “get in tune with the actual conditions” and to base our policies on realistic assessments rather than proceeding from abstract principles or dogma. For the first time, we began describing our current conditions as those of an “ebb” in the class struggle rather than an “up-surge.” This meant adjustments were in order.

The three evils campaign was taken up with a lot of enthusiasm by the rank and file. Many dedicated activists had experienced firsthand the frustration and isolation stemming from the errors of the “anti-rightism” fight against Nicolaus. They had been aiming their main blows at center and even



The CPML participated in demonstrations to ban the South African Krugerrand

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Selling CPML literature in New York.

At various times, the CPML made both rightist errors and straight-up chauvinist errors on the national question.

left-center forces in their areas of mass work. The trade union units particularly summed up their mistakes and called for new policies and tactics. The same was true in nationalities work. Under the previous policy, for instance, our cadres in the Black United Front in Brooklyn had the line of aiming their main blow at “reformist preachers” like Rev. Herbert Daughtry, when he was clearly a progressive force to be united with and developed.

In sum-up after sum-up, then, CPML members were concluding that the main errors they had been making were connected to a left deviation. In the spring of 1979, the Central Committee met and discussed the issue. I presented a paper on the ideological roots of right errors in reformism and left errors in anarchism. Looking at our practice, I argued that our erroneous policies in mass work had been mainly ultraleft while our mistakes in organizational work were mainly rightist.

Another paper was presented by the Southern regional organizer. She argued that our main errors since the founding congress were ultraleft and correcting them was the main task at hand. At the same time, she upheld the program as basically correct and warned about a growing right danger. Three or four other views on various aspects of the issue were also put forward at this meeting.

One claimed that the issue of “right” or “left” errors being the main danger was a diversion. This was from a Black Central Committee member from the South, who argued that the real main danger was white chauvinism and that other

problems were secondary.

This comrade's viewpoint was combined with the fact that considerable struggle and tension were developing among the rank and file along nationality lines in several districts. There had been some instances of blatant white chauvinist errors and a strong response to it. There had also been some nationalist errors.

One key problem was weaknesses within the central leadership. The Puerto Rican Commission and Chicano Commission, for instance, were weak, politically unclear and poorly led. The Standing Committee did little to deal with the problem decisively and at one point was accused of "benign neglect" — a term that had been applied to the Nixon Administration.

Nationalities conference

The response of the leadership to these criticisms was to organize a party-wide conference on nationalities work. The aim was to air the criticisms, struggle over their meaning and, hopefully, unite on a firmer, clear basis. The conference was held toward the end of 1979, and, while I did not personally attend, the reports of almost everyone immediately after the conference who had attended were enthusiastic. Later, however, a number of attendees would reverse their verdicts.

The main lessons of the conference were summed up at its close in a speech by Mike Klonsky, CPML chairman. The text was printed soon afterwards in a special issue of *Class Struggle* on the national question. This was seen as the best issue of our theoretical journal and the only one where we sold almost every copy.

Klonsky's speech mainly dealt with the *method* of inner party struggle. He also traced the history of errors in the U.S. left around the national question and made a good effort at applying the substance of Mao Zedong's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People" to our problems. Moreover, he stressed the link that existed between the "three evils" — sectarianism, subjectivism and bureaucracy — and mistakes on the national question.

He did not, however, deal with some of the basic differences that had arisen. Which was the *main* source of our problems — a "left" deviation in the basic line or white chauvinism?

I argued at the Central Committee meeting and later that our main problem was the left deviation and that it affected everything, including the national question. This was not to say that there were not right errors or that errors around



CPML's Program and Political Report contained mistaken assessments of conditions in the country and within the mass movement.

When problems arose, a style of commandism and a practice of shifting blame to the ranks often emerged.

chauvinism did not have an independent thrust and basis of their own. At various times, the CPML made both rightist errors and straight-up chauvinist errors on the national question.

I argued that this was initially evident in our work within the Black United Front in New York. We were following a policy of aiming our main blow at the middle forces — a classic error in the direction of “left” opportunism, not rightism, even though its impact was certainly white chauvinist in practice. But to argue that the main problem here was white chauvinism, I concluded, was to fail to get at the roots of *why* we were making these kinds of mistakes.

Other comrades came at the problem from a different angle. Harry Haywood and a Black Central Committee member from the South, for example, focused on the question of nationalism. They agreed that ultraleftism was the main error to be corrected and that white chauvinism generally took priority over nationalism in errors in that area. But they also held to the “Leninist division of labor.” They saw that part of their responsibility to minority cadre was to deal with nationalism among the minority party members, and they did so.

“Crisis in Marxism”?

Another important feature of the spring 1979 Central Committee meeting that would have big implications later was a long report by Dan Burstein, editor of *The Call*. He had just returned from China, Kampuchea and some international meetings with several other Marxist-Leninist parties.

His report, in the form of a discussion paper, presented us with the “crisis in Marxism” thesis that placed us at what he called a “crossroads” in history. He was deeply affected personally, I believe, by his experiences in China and Kampuchea. Crimes committed under the cover of ultraleft policies in those countries, he argued, had given us “an unprecedentedly enormous task” of proving that “socialism is the way of the future, even in the eyes of militant workers and progressive people.”

With these problems now on the table, the Central Committee called for a second congress. It set a period for discussion and debate, while warning against a tendency for liquidating organizational tasks.

A debate immediately broke out within the Standing Committee over what would be the scope of the pre-congress discussion. Burstein called for virtually unlimited debate, focusing on “calling into question” the validity of concepts

of the dictatorship of the proletariat, armed struggle and the need for a Leninist party. Others, particularly Klonsky and myself, opposed this position. We said the discussion should mainly be aimed at summing up our experience and correcting our errors, on the basis of practice and in a step-by-step fashion. The “big questions” could be discussed as part of our theoretical work after the congress, but to do so in the pre-congress debate was diversionary and would hurt the rectification of ultraleftism.

Burstein at first agreed to this restriction, but later changed his mind and insisted on carrying out his polemic. He won over half the Standing Committee, thus splitting the top leadership and promoting a rightist faction. Other CPML leaders soon began taking sides on the regional and local levels. In short order, there were several factions — the right, the left and the center. The “center” faction had two wings; one defended the left and attacked the right, while the other defended the right and attacked the left — thus becoming known as the “left center” and “right center” respectively.

The key problem at this point was the fact that many rank and file members viewed these disputes as “abstract battles between intellectuals.” Since they did not see an immediate connection between the debate and their problems in the mass work, they tended to be neutral or sympathetic to Burstein simply because he was opposed to the incumbents. The genuine left, moreover, for the most part, failed in giving direct political guidance in a number of important local struggles.



Baltimore rally organized by JOIN campaign.

The reasons for this were complex. In some cases, rightists in charge of districts actually blocked leaders from the center from contacting the units directly. In other cases, the left blocked itself by being bureaucratic — a certain struggle was not their area of responsibility, so if it was being misled, then it was not their problem. But none of this was insurmountable, and in that sense the real problem was the left's weaknesses in taking initiative and *organizing* support for correct views and methods throughout the party, even if it meant bypassing normal procedures.

Disintegration

In general, the emergence of two lines within the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist organization need not be seen as a crisis or even viewed negatively. It can be an opportunity for an organization to practice democracy, sum up its work and unite the entire organization on a higher level.

But this was not to be the case with the CPML.

There were a number of important reasons. One group of them can be summed up as weakness in the leadership and its practices — both in the immediate struggle and over the previous period from the time of the founding congress. First, there were serious abrogations of inner party democracy. Prior to the Nicolaus campaign, for instance, the OL's internal journal was a rank and file forum for debate and sum-ups. But after Nicolaus' expulsion, the journal consisted almost entirely of top-down reports and articles from Standing Committee members. When differences did emerge in the districts, unorthodox views were usually quickly labeled as "revisionist," since every idea had to be either "proletarian" or "bourgeois." For newer cadres or those lacking in self-confidence, this atmosphere effectively stifled inner party democracy.

The lack of democracy also meant weaknesses in the leadership's practice of the mass line. When problems arose, a style of commandism and a practice of shifting blame to the ranks often emerged. While the leading core at the center worked very hard and made many personal sacrifices, they also fell into bureaucratism. In many cases, they became divorced from contact with the masses, spending what free time they had together in a manner that promoted cliquishness.

This self-isolation of the leadership in the center also meant serious shortcomings in its ability to organize the struggle and to rely on the ranks in summing up experience. The struggle became one-sidedly a "battle of ideas" between

leading figures, which was viewed by the ranks as an arrogant disregard for their opinions.

The developing right wing took full advantage of these weaknesses. They elevated past errors and styles of work over the actual political substance of the issues at stake. Attempts by the genuine left to criticize erroneous ideas in the debate were immediately labeled as “undemocratic” and “attacks on the rank and file” or “refusing to break with the old ways.” In addition, key figures in the leadership were subjected to slander campaigns concerning their personal honesty and morality. Once the charges were made, they were often retracted, but the damage had been done, often in the classic style of police agents.

Thus the genuine left core in the leadership was put on the defensive and made the target of the main blow. This weakness was compounded, moreover, by the inability of the left to unite among itself and to organize a left trend throughout the party. Some of this was inevitable due to conditions. But it was also a result of abdication on the part of some, especially the chairman, and mistaken tactics on the part of others, including myself.

These difficulties were to be heightened by a development that shook the organization from top to bottom — the resignation of Dan Burstein. After unsuccessfully trying to express the views of the right in a paper that would be acceptable for the congress debate, he decided to go all the way with

By the Second Congress, the CPML was reduced to less than 400 members, a loss of nearly two-thirds. Liquidationism was clearly at an advanced stage.



CPML-organized Fightback demonstration in Boston.

BLACK BOLSHEVIK

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN
AFRO-AMERICAN COMMUNIST



HARRY HAYWOOD

*Liberator Press published
this autobiography by
Harry Haywood, a veteran
of the CPUSA.*

a conclusion he had been wrestling with for some time privately: the real source of the CPML's problems was Marxism-Leninism. He announced that he now believed this and left the organization.

This placed his defenders remaining in the CPML in an awkward position. On one hand, they claimed Burstein wasn't really rejecting Leninism. On the other, they were now faced with his admission that he was doing just that. As a result, several more Central Committee members, including the vice chairman, also resigned. This happened at an emergency conference organized by the center faction, which, in turn, abolished the entire Central Committee and took over the remnants of the central office.

The CPML thus approached its second congress in a severely weakened condition. The chairman of the party had resigned his post while remaining a participant in the left faction. He had been immobilized, partly by choice and partly by difficult circumstances. A slander campaign had put him "on trial" for certain "crimes," later shown to be gross distortions. He was also threatened, both openly and covertly, with physical violence.

But whatever can be said for Klonsky's role, it was not decisive in what was to follow. In many ways, the die had already been cast. Many of us were relatively certain of the outcome of the impending events. Nonetheless we felt compelled to play out our parts to the finish, for the sake of future party building efforts as well as for our own sense of our personal integrity.

A key development was the stand taken by a Central Committee member from California. Previously he had presented himself as a voice of "the center." In private discussions with the left, he assured us that he held to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and opposed the Burstein line. He argued, however, that it was necessary to move as close to Burstein's position as possible if a majority of the party was to be united and saved.

But this member faced a crucial choice once the leaders of the right resigned. Either he could denounce them and unite with the left, or he could take up their position himself.

He chose the latter course and at the congress became the main spokesman for the right. He dropped all his former hedges and arrived at the first day of the congress with a new document where he embraced all Burstein's main points — abandonment of the Leninist party, rejection of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. It was a classic case of conciliation with rightism leading one to become a rightist oneself.

Second Congress

By the opening of the second congress, the CPML was reduced to less than 400 members, a loss of nearly two-thirds. Of these, only 22% were minorities, a decline from 33%. (Of the minorities, 66% were Afro-American, 12% Chicano, 14% Puerto Rican and 2% others.) The proportion of men to women was still 50-50, but the percentage of those from the working class had declined. Liquidationism was clearly virulent and at an advanced stage.


Dozens of resolutions, reports, papers and amendments had been put forward for consideration by the congress delegates. Most dealt with the problem of ultraleftism in one form or another, and, if the effort had been made, a systematic rectification of our past errors could have been distilled from these writings.

But the right insisted on dealing with the “big questions,” and most of these documents were set aside or adopted with little or no discussion. The main events, then, were relatively straightforward. There was a series of panels where the right, left and center put forward their views. The main issues boiled down to two — first, what was the cause of our problems and how could we correct them; second, where did we stand on the fundamentals of Marxism?

In the end, the key debate turned on only one issue: would we unite on the Leninist theory of the state, explicitly advocating the proletarian dictatorship as our strategic goal in the transition to communism. The left faction asked me to draft our position, which I did reluctantly. I wrote a summary of the theory as clear and concise as possible, knowing that it would split the organization.

But since the issue had been forced, meaning that the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat was about to be voted up or down, the left caucus at the congress decided to stand firmer than ever. The dictatorship of the proletariat and other basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, we insisted, were neither “models” nor abstract “dogmas.” Rather, they represented the summed-up experience of our class in over 100 countries in 100 years. We would improve it, add to it, look critically at it, and further develop it. But we would never reject or abandon it, especially as a result of the waverings and whinings of the petty bourgeoisie’s despair and the instability of a handful of intellectuals.

In short, if we did not draw the line here, then we had no right to call ourselves communists. However left our rhetoric, we would be nothing but common liberals.



In the end, the key debate was whether we would unite on the Leninist theory of the state, explicitly advocating proletarian dictatorship as our goal.

The liquidation of the CPML was a serious setback for the communist movement in the U.S.

At one point, the right, using a number of intermediaries, approached me with a “compromise.” They would support my resolution, including the wording of all analysis of the state, if I would do one thing: just eliminate four words — “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The left rejected the compromise, remembering Lenin’s adage that if you want to stop people from vacillating, then you must not vacillate yourself. After some parliamentary maneuvering, however, a delegate from the center faction put forward a counter proposal. It stated that the congress should set aside all sections of the party program *except* those dealing with the dictatorship of the proletariat. He argued that it was the right’s task to prove these sections false. Until then, they should stand. The left and center united on this resolution and defeated the right.

But it meant little in the end. In one of the meetings of the left faction at the congress, the Southern regional organizer asked us, “What is the worst that can happen?” I answered that a victory for the right and a split would be the biggest disaster. “No,” she replied, “the worst would be a standoff, where they win some and we win some, but no one wins or loses decisively. That will prolong and aggravate the disintegration and despair. It would be better to have a clean split, where we are either a clear minority or majority. At least then we would be intact and in a position to move forward.”

She was proved correct on this point.

It was becoming clearer and clearer that no matter what happened at the congress, that petty bourgeois and semi-anarchist methods of organization were widely accepted. In part, this was due to earlier abuses of democratic centralism. But to leave it at that would be wrong. It was also due, in large part, to the vacillation of many of the cadre who, for various reasons, were rejecting a Leninist party. But with nothing to take its place, it meant that further disintegration lay ahead of us.

Dissolution

The congress closed by selecting its new Central Committee, which met briefly at the end of the gathering. It was quickly decided to put ongoing responsibility in Chicago, site of the much-scaled-down national office, into the hands of a comrade from the Afro-American Commission, and a Chicago comrade, who spoke for the left-center and right-center forces respectively. To be blunt, the mess was dumped in their laps so everyone could leave as quickly as possible.

The CPML published a regular newspaper as well as other books and magazines.



tion. The national organization is a federation of districts, the districts are a federation of the local branches, and each branch is a federation of individual activists.”

The great irony is that, in one sense, the CPML-RWH merger was a big success. Members of both groups embraced this viewpoint and have put it into practice. The result is that neither exists any longer except as an amorphous and shrinking group of people who have each other’s phone numbers.

Could things have turned out differently for the CPML? I believe the organization would have gone through a crisis of one sort or another even if its leadership had made fewer mistakes. This is because of the impact of external factors — the repudiation of the cultural revolution in China, and the rightward shift of the U.S. bourgeoisie, including its impact on the petty bourgeoisie.

But the damage did not have to be as severe as it was. If the genuine left in the leadership had acted differently, I believe an organized core of several hundred activists could have weathered the storm and gone on to rectify its errors and unite with others in building a party. In this regard, a key mistake was “upholding party unity at all costs” — it would have been necessary at an earlier point to call for a clean break, a split away from social democracy and revisionism.

There is little disagreement among Marxist-Leninists that the liquidation of the CPML was a serious setback for the communist movement in the U.S. This brief account tries to point to some of the lessons and errors to be avoided. One remaining question, however, is what should those people



JOIN march in Boston against segregation.

One straw that center forces, both left and right, clung to throughout this period was the hope that “the merger” would arrive in time to save the day. This was the plan for uniting organizationally with the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters. Apart from uniting more Marxist-Leninists into a single organization, this prospect was seen as one which could double our size and give us a firmer footing in some trade unions. It was a plan supported by everyone, including myself at the time, as the only basis for optimism. The only hesitation came from some minority comrades, who were concerned about two issues. First, since RWH was practically all white and had a dubious past record on the national question, would this help or hinder their work? Second, if we merged with the RWH, would it hinder our ability to merge with the League of Revolutionary Struggle?

Both turned out to be moot points. The merger was an illusion which the left should have exposed but did not. The fact was that the closer we united with the RWH, the quicker was the pace of our own liquidation.

It should not have been surprising. The outline of the RWH’s theory for liquidationism was put to us quite sharply during a leadership-to-leadership liaison meeting prior to the congress. One RWH leader, speaking for the RWH, told us not to be so “worried about liquidationism.” They had, he said, faced the problem “and even gone over to the other side.” “It’s not such a bad place to be,” he explained. “The way we describe it is that we exist on three levels of federa-

who consider themselves pro-party do now?

The fact is that their numbers are dwindling. Thousands who were members of Marxist-Leninist organizations in the 1970s and early 1980s no longer consider themselves part of the communist movement. And growing numbers of these are no longer active even in the various mass movements — they have simply “burned out” and retreated into private life.

Fighting liquidationism

One prescription for fighting this bitter fruit of liquidationism was put forward at the close of the congress by a delegate representing the left center. “Stay active, stay together and stay red” — that was the slogan his district united around as a way to move ahead. The organization was held up as a district where the CPML-RWH merger had already been accomplished. What had actually happened, however, was that a local circle had formed in opposition to what remained of both the CPML and RWH. After continuing some positive work for a year or more, it is now practically disintegrated.

I believe there is some truth in the “three mainstays” slogan. At least implicitly, they go against the tendency of some ex-Marxist-Leninists to join up with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) or to have the RWH’s “three levels of federation” suck them deeper into the swamp. But there are some problems with vagueness.

- **“Staying Red.”** Here the problem is the necessity of combining a firm class stand on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism with a scientific method in the further application of Marxism-Leninism to the actual conditions in our country. When faced with the tendency toward revisionism and social democracy, we must not waver on upholding the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. This theoretical work represents the summed-up experience of our class. It should be modified, further developed and changed only through new discoveries based on the summation of new revolutionary experience or a deeper knowledge of the past.

At the same time we must recognize that much theoretical work remains to be done. I would stress three areas: (1) an immediate tactical program and a deeper strategic program that would take as their starting points an analysis of classes and current conditions in the U.S.; (2) further elaboration on how class struggle and national struggle are interconnected and separate; and (3) an elucidation of the internal laws of development of the Soviet Union and the Soviet-bloc

Activists should not aim to remain a local circle. Their responsibility is to link up with all pro-party forces, especially nationwide organizations.

The main source of strength in our efforts to establish a party will be found among the new and rising generation of fighters.

countries.

• **“Staying Together.”** Obviously, it is better to be organized than unorganized. For many of the people we are talking about, even joining a study group or discussion circle would be a step forward. But there are also different types of organizations, such as those based on federationism or on democratic centralism.

“Staying together” should mean using democratic centralism to combat and reverse the “three levels of federation.” In certain cities, where no Marxist-Leninist collective or district exists, teams of activists and study groups should unite to form one. However, their aim should not be to remain a local circle. As Leninists, their responsibility is to link up with all pro-party forces, especially nationwide organizations.

Today this means linking up with and joining the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) (LRS). As the only group of our trend that survived the liquidationist barrage, the LRS deserves the support of all those who still want to see Marxist-Leninists unite in a single party. This nationwide organization of revolutionaries has not only survived, it has continued to develop a generally correct line, internal structure and methods of leadership.

Communists need not have complete unity on every aspect of political line and program in order to be in the same Marxist-Leninist organization. Instead, they need to uphold a common program on which there is general agreement. On certain points, naturally, there will be majority and minority positions, which can be debated, discussed and resolved internally in due time and with good methods.

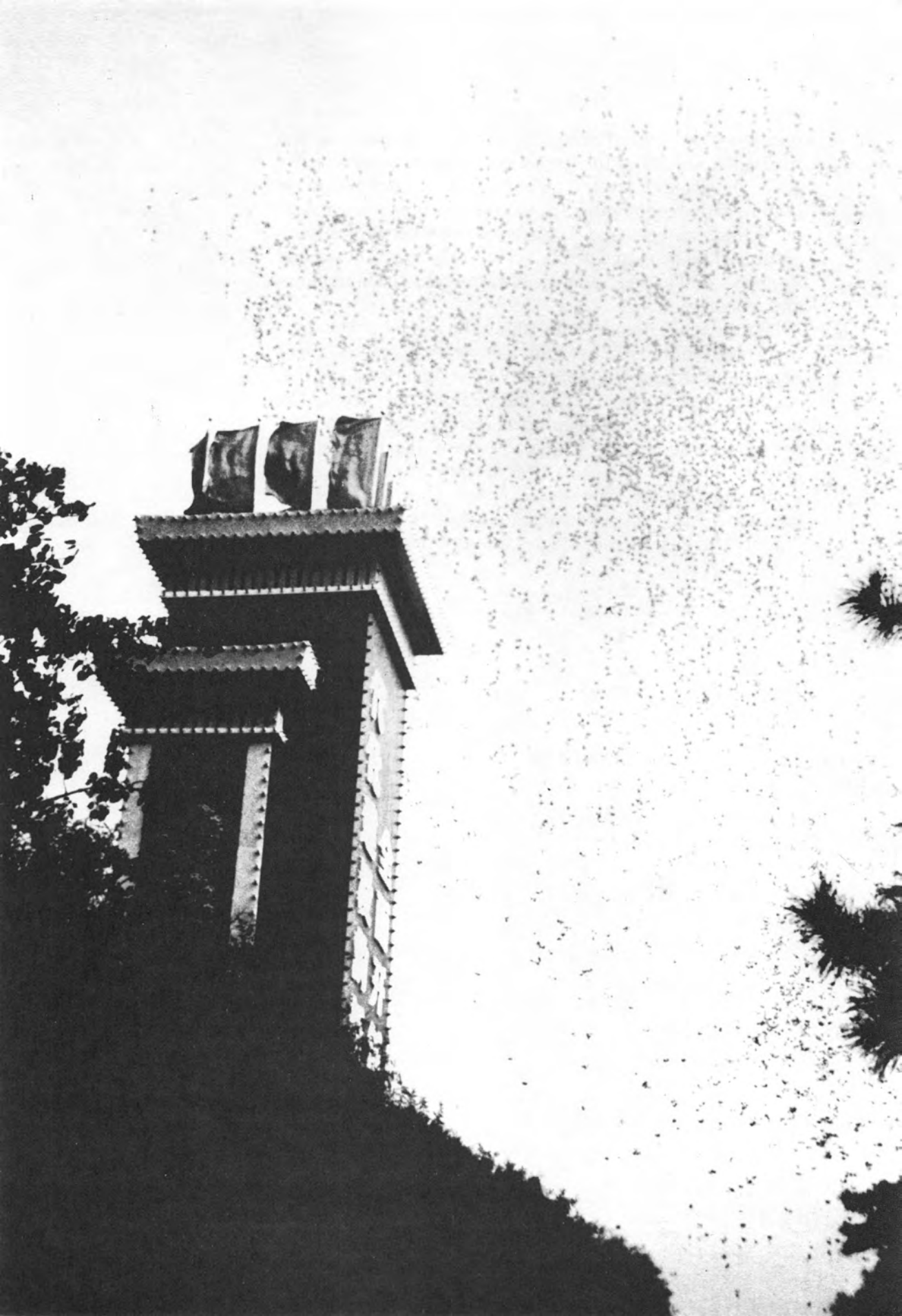
The LRS recently concluded its Second Congress. In the pre-congress period, there was wide and thorough discussion. At the congress sessions themselves, minority and majority positions were presented. In certain cases, the minority won over a majority and achieved a higher level of unity. This shows a healthy practice of democratic centralism.

The LRS also has a foothold among working class and oppressed nationality activists, which was gained over ten years of struggle and is now growing. It has a revolutionary press suitable for regular agitation and propaganda work. It has the means to sum up work and to practice the mass line collectively. Communists know they cannot last long without these things.

• **“Staying Active.”** Politically inactive people rarely remain or become communists. If they are cynical about the past and burned out, then inactivity will gradually deepen

their cynicism and drift into liberalism. So encouraging and finding opportunities for former comrades to become active again, on whatever level, is quite necessary. They may never become active *communists* again. But they can use their skills in the mass struggle, and they can become a network of sympathizers that helps and assists a communist organization and its press. And in time, some will be won back to communism and the party.

But there is another lesson about the role of political activity. Most of those active *now* are from a *new* generation of people and struggles. The history of revolution shows that successful parties are mainly comprised of young people, the new and dynamic element in their class and in society. Of course, the door must stay open to those of the previous generation. They have much to offer in terms of experience and leadership. But the main source of strength in our efforts to establish a party will be found among the new and rising generation of fighters. They are our first priority for the future.



The Revolution in China's Countryside

Tak Matsusaka

The twists and turns of events in China are often bewildering. As one of many progressives in the U.S. who have been following China with a sympathetic eye over the last decade, I have been perplexed many times. Yet, past experience has taught me that being "bewildered" is more often than not a result of imposing my own assumptions, expectations and prejudices in interpreting Chinese affairs, looking at policies in isolation from the overall context, and jumping to conclusions based on subjective or idealistic views of what I think socialism *ought* to look like.

The series of economic and administrative reforms instituted in China over the past several years is clearly a case where interpretations based on simplistic formulas or idealistic expectations about socialism are bound to lead to confusion. Already, "China watchers" in this country are talking about the "restoration of capitalism" in China. The rural responsibility system, the increased autonomy of large indus-

Tak Matsusaka is an activist in the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association in Boston.



UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

Celebrating 35th anniversary of Chinese revolution, October 1, 1984.

(Facing page) Beginning of China's National Day Celebration, October 1, 1984.

LEON SUN



Float showing China's modernization.

trial enterprises, the use of “free market” mechanisms to regulate supply and demand, and the stress on developing an active commodity economy are taken as signs that China has now abandoned the “socialist road.”

To say that such conclusions are premature would be too generous. I don't think they have any real basis in fact. I can't help but feel that such views stem from wishful thinking on the one hand and the disillusionment of idealistic expectations on the other. Such perspectives are often the product of defining socialism in terms of some universal formula or a rigid set of political, economic and social institutions. Accordingly, any deviation from this formula or institutional framework is seen as a departure from the “socialist road.”

The construction of socialism in an advanced industrial country will take a very different form as compared to socialist construction in a developing country such as China. Differences in social, political, economic and historical conditions will result in very different manifestations of socialism. Socialist institutions and policies cannot be expected to take the same shape in all countries.

This is not to say, however, that socialism can't be defined or that there are no features and characteristics of socialist societies in general. First and foremost a socialist system is one in which the working class and its allies hold political power. This political power is used to implement policies and build institutions that defend their class interest. Second, a socialist system is one in which the exploitation of one class of people by another is abolished. The eradication of class exploitation distinguishes socialism from all systems that

Interpretations of China's reforms based on simplistic formulations about socialism are bound to lead to confusion.



Satellite launching. China is rapidly developing modern technology.

have historically come before. Third, socialism is characterized by the public ownership of the main means of production in society. The factories, the power plants, the mines and other production facilities are owned publicly or collectively by those who work them.

China's responsibility system does not lie outside of this general concept of socialism. This is not to say that I would defend China's current reform movement as being the final solution to the problem of socialist modernization. Such a conclusion would be premature.

Agriculture and the tasks of socialist development in China

Before going into some of the reasons for making the above assertion, it would be useful to look at the background and context of the reform movement in China today.

Since 1949, China has been trying to tackle some of the basic problems it confronts as a poor, third world country. Like most third world countries, the majority of China's population is in the agricultural sector (80%), and the greater part of its social wealth comes from agricultural production. Beginning from this base, China is striving to become an advanced, industrial country by the beginning of the next century.

The dimensions of this goal are truly staggering. China is a country of one billion people. In absolute terms, its industrial base is already very powerful: China is a leading world producer of

China has been trying to tackle some of the basic problems it confronts as a poor, third world country.

Woman with bound feet. China is overcoming centuries of feudal ideology.

LEON SUN



China must expand its social wealth to be able to industrialize. This must take place in the agricultural sector.

coal and steel. In relative terms, in terms of production per capita, however, China is unquestionably poor. Thus, the China that can launch satellites is still a developing, agrarian country.

To meet the ambitious goals set for the end of this century, China must accelerate the expansion of its social wealth in order to have the resources necessary for industrialization. As an agrarian country, this expansion of social wealth must take place primarily in its agricultural sector. Per capita agricultural output must be dramatically increased. So long as agricultural producers consume a large proportion of what they produce, the funds needed for development can only accumulate very slowly.

Per capita agricultural output can be increased in a variety of ways. Mechanization, where conditions permit, is one technique. The use of scientific farming to increase yields is another. The reorganization of agricultural production for greater efficiency is another possibility. Restricting consumption can also produce the same economic effect with respect to industrialization as increasing output. The stabilization of population growth must also accompany an effort to increase per capita output.

All developing third world countries, socialist or capitalist, must accomplish this task some way. Countries with special natural resources such as oil can minimize or even eliminate dependence on the agricultural sector. Foreign loans and international trade can help ease the burden shouldered by the agricultural sector. The balance of light and heavy industry implemented by the country's industrialization policy



Colonialists and imperialists brutally exploited Chinese people until 1949.

can also have a tremendous impact on the pressures imposed on agriculture.

Although all developing countries face the same basic problem, there is a sharp distinction between socialist and capitalist solutions. Capitalist methods intensify the difficulties faced by agricultural producers. Peasant farmers are plundered through the expropriation of land, landlordism, heavy taxation or usury. In many situations, capitalist methods lead to cash-crop economies, which cannot adequately feed the population. In most cases, these methods lead to an underdevelopment of the agricultural sector. A developing socialist society like China, under the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry, cannot tolerate this type of exploitation of agricultural producers; yet, the resources necessary for modernization must somehow be extracted from agriculture. To accomplish this task without betraying the worker-peasant alliance is the single greatest challenge facing socialist agricultural policy.

Land reform and collectivization: the initial solution in China

The first major step in the formulation of a comprehensive agricultural policy in socialist China was land reform beginning in 1950. Land reform eliminated landlordism and tenancy and created individual agricultural producers. Landlord holdings were confiscated and divided among the peasant households. All peasants received some land. This ended the main form of exploitative relationships in the countryside. In this context, land reform in China must be viewed as a consistently socialist policy.

The second major step was collectivization. The process of encouraging individual peasant households to share resources and tools and to cooperate in cultivation began soon after land reform. The collectivization movement began in 1955 and culminated in the establishment of people's communes in 1958. The basic and original purpose of collectivization was to expand agricultural production and to ease some of the hardships faced by the agricultural sector in the process of rapid industrialization. Efficiencies of scale (larger plots of land), efficiencies resulting from cooperative work, the opening of new land through reclamation projects and the creation of large tracts of land suitable for the application of machinery were some of the major expectations. In many ways, collectivization was also a matter of survival.



Peasants burning landlords' deeds in the early 1950s.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, an emerging trend saw collectivization as a revolution divorced from its economic consequences.

The international blockade against China at the time imposed severe hardships on the country as a whole; without an effective way to share these hardships, many peasant households would have simply “gone under.”

In many cases, the expectations held for collectivization were met. Production was increased; new lands were opened; production became more rational and efficient. In other cases, the effort was less than successful. According to current Chinese assessments of the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, the process of evaluating the success of collectivization vis-a-vis these expectations was distorted by an emerging



XINHUA

Collectivization began in late 1950s.

political trend that saw collectivization as a social revolution divorced from its economic consequences. People’s communes came to be seen as an expression of the socialist “ideal” in the countryside equating socialism with collectivization.

By the time of the cultural revolution (1966–1976), “the higher the level of collectivization, the better” had become a widespread view. Collectivization versus individual household production was no longer debated within the context of socialist agricultural policy, but became polarized into the arena of “socialist road versus capitalist road.”

Collectivization had become a virtue or socialist principle in and of itself, independent of actual economic results and its consequences on the living conditions of the people.

According to current Chinese views, this approach to agricultural policy led to stagnation. While production did rise throughout most of the cultural revolution period, so did population. Overall per capita productivity was low, and there was a significant degree of underemployment, both masked by the system of collective production and income distribution. Furthermore, the differential between rural and urban incomes and living standards was very sharp. A great many rural families were living on *annual* incomes that were roughly equal to the *monthly* incomes of urban families. This is precisely the kind of polarization between industrial and agricultural sectors or “town and country” that socialist policy aims at avoiding. These and other assessments led to the formulation of a new set of agricultural policies that today are known as “the responsibility system.”

The responsibility system in the countryside

The responsibility system was designed as a way to break out of the earlier period of stagnation. Like collectivization

Productivity was low, and there was significant underemployment, masked by collective production and income distribution.



New construction is evident throughout China's countryside.

in its initial stages, the primary goal is to expand per capita agricultural production as rapidly as possible, in a way that is consistent with socialism. This system, as it has evolved over the past five years, has the following features:

1. The individual farming household has replaced the larger collective (usually consisting of several dozen households, formerly called the production team) as the basic economic unit in agriculture. Each household now plans and manages its own production, making decisions about what to grow, how much to grow, how to allocate labor, whether to invest income in machinery and fertilizer or whether to build a house and buy a TV set. Income is dependent on household output, so that the more the household produces, the more income they have at their disposal.

2. Land is allocated to individual households according to a contract system. Farmers contract land from the state for a period of up to 15 years. The amount of land contracted by a household varies, and is an independent economic decision limited mainly by the availability of land in a given area and the capabilities of the household. Some farmers contract large tracts; others contract small ones. The decision is based on what a household thinks it can manage, and how much of the household's income is dependent on land cultivation. Land ownership, however, remains in the hands of the state and cannot be bought or sold.

3. The contract system also has applications beyond access to land. Rural households can enter into contracts with





UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

Three views of a new house in the countryside. (Above, left and right)

the state to raise pigs and ducks or manage fish ponds. They can enter into contracts to produce cash crops (such as cooking oil), provide timber, or process agricultural products and other traditional “sidelines.” Households or individuals can submit contracts to provide transportation services, machine repair services, agronomic services and other activities. Off-season cottage industries are also organized under this system. Partnerships among individuals and households are also starting small-scale industrial projects in the countryside. Some of these enterprises hire workers, although this is very limited.

This “responsibility system” places heavy emphasis on individual initiative and individual latitude in economic decision-making. The economic incentives to increase per capita output are high, since income is directly proportional to output. In the past, the income “leveling” effect of collective income distribution was a serious disincentive to increased productivity. Income was not proportional to the amount of work someone did.

Under the present system there is also discretion for individuals as to what to do with their income. A farmer may invest in production, or may consume income in the form of TV sets, bicycles, new homes, etc. Under the old collective system, the collective made decisions about how much income would be put back into production and how much could be distributed for discretionary, individual consumption. Today initiative also takes the form of starting new enterprises. New resources are being tapped, unfilled eco-



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conomic niches are being exploited, and underemployment is being reduced through these activities. Such enterprises are already contributing significantly to China's total industrial output.

This emphasis on the individual producer (that is, the individual farmer or rural household), however, does not eliminate state planning nor does it minimize the active role played by local, regional, and central government bodies. Targets set by these levels of government must still be met and must be carried out within the framework of existing laws and regulations with respect to hiring labor, making use of state property and protecting the environment. The contract system operates as a supplement to state-owned and state-managed industries and does not operate independently of the larger socialist economy. Thus, while it leads to diversification of the economy and introduces a great deal of leeway in local and individual decision-making, it is not a "laissez-faire" system. Greater latitude on localized day-to-day economic decision-making, in fact, is seen as a way to make state planning more effective and responsive to the needs of the people.

The impact of the responsibility system on China's economy

The aim of the responsibility system in the countryside is to increase per capita agricultural output. The 7.5% average annual growth rate in agricultural output seen over the last five years is a significant measure of the initial success of this system. The 400 million ton target for grain production by 1985 as set in the current five-year plan does not seem unreasonable, since 380 million tons were produced in 1983.

Rural per capita incomes have risen sharply, and are perhaps an even better reflection of the performance of the responsibility system than gross output figures.¹ Since 1978, annual rural per capita incomes have doubled, to reach 270 RMB in 1983 (one RMB or "yuan" exchanges for somewhat more than .50 U.S. dollars).²

The rise in per capita incomes, however, does not show the full impact of the rural responsibility system in the countryside. There are two other particularly significant developments that deserve attention.

First, the rapid expansion of small-scale service and industrial activity in the countryside, stimulated by the responsibility system, has diversified the rural economy. This begins to resolve the problem of underemployment. It also reduces



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The responsibility system was designed to expand agricultural production rapidly, in a way consistent with socialism.

In the past, collective income distribution had a 'leveling' effect — income was not proportional to the amount of work someone did.

the dependence of rural households on crop cultivation as their major source of income. In fact, Chinese statisticians point out that there is a direct relationship between the prosperity of a household and the diversity of its income sources. The poorer rural households are those that rely entirely on crop cultivation.

The significance of this development, if it can continue to move in this direction, is this: without the full mechanization of agriculture in China (and this seems very far off), the discrepancy between the productivity of agricultural and industrial labor will continue. The countryside will remain poorer, while the industrial cities will enjoy relative prosperity. This isn't necessarily due to the exploitation of the countryside by the cities (although this happens under capitalist development), but due to the fact that agricultural labor, without major technological advances, does not produce as much value as industrial labor. Countries like Japan, where rice cultivation is minimally mechanized, solve this problem by massive government subsidies to their farmers and/or protectionist barriers coupled with price supports. This is not even a remotely possible solution for China. The diversification of rural incomes and the possibility of engaging in part-time crop cultivation can build rural prosperity without artificially raising grain prices and fueling inflation. Potentially this is a major step towards closing the rural-urban gap.

Second, the rise in rural incomes is taking place at a time when a major emphasis is being placed on the production of consumer goods in the industrial sector. Newly prosperous rural households with virtually complete discretion as to how



UNITY PHOTO: BEN FERRIS

Many families are choosing to have one child.

to dispose of their income, are becoming a major market for China's growing light industrial sector. The growth of the commodity economy in China means that agricultural surplus can be transferred into industry through the sale of industrial commodities to the rural market, rather than through taxation or the imposed discipline of restricted consumption characteristic of the collective system. *This process, at the same time, improves the rural standard of living.*

This development, if it can continue, will represent a major breakthrough in the Chinese economy. If industry cannot produce large quantities of consumer goods, rising rural incomes will not have an economically productive outlet. Peasant incomes spent on imported goods or on lavish traditional weddings or funerals, etc., do not build the economy. Where these and similar activities are the only outlets for rural income, consumption must be discouraged, savings encouraged, or both practices enforced by official policy. This is why a major component of the economic reforms being implemented in China today is the adjustment of the balance between heavy and light industry, and why this balance has a big impact on the living standard of agricultural producers.

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Side effects and shortcomings

Like any policy or set of policies, the responsibility system may have very serious negative side effects or shortcomings that may eventually come to challenge the viability of the system. As mentioned earlier, some people think that it represents the emergence of capitalism. I'd like to review some of the weaknesses or alleged weaknesses that have been frequently pointed out by Western observers or by the Chinese themselves during the course of policy debate.

One of the most frequently cited problems attributed to the responsibility system is the link between rural resistance to the population policy (one child per family) and the fact that individual households are now the basic economic unit in the countryside. The resistance is acknowledged by Chinese authorities, and the link seems to be a logical conclusion. Peasant households want more children so that their households can be more productive. Furthermore, children continue to represent the main form of "social security" for old people in the countryside.

Although I think there is a legitimate basis to make this link, there is also a danger of taking it too far. First of all, there is a strong resistance to population policy in the coun-

The 7.5% annual growth rate in agricultural output over the last five years is a significant measure of the initial success of the new system.

Newly prosperous rural households are becoming a major market for China's light industry.

New road being built through rural marshlands.

CHINA RECONSTRUCTS



tryside that is unrelated to the responsibility system. Feudal thinking is deeply entrenched. Family planning has encountered rural opposition from the start, when it was first pushed in the 1950s. Rather than blame the responsibility system itself, I feel that it would be more accurate to say that certain features of the responsibility system are aggravating an existing problem. Secondly, the diversification of the rural economy and the decreasing dependence of rural households on crop cultivation tend to weaken the link. Families dependent entirely on crop cultivation may want more children so that they can contract more land and increase household income, but with the availability of diversified occupations, there is less of an incentive to do this. As to the argument that the more household members working, the larger the household income, the same can be said of the urban family.

Another major argument that has been raised against the responsibility system is that it is hindering the mechanization of agriculture. Large tracts of land on the north China plain, which are suitable for tractor farming, for example, are being broken up to be cultivated as small strips by individual households. This seems to be a valid objection. However, in looking at this problem of mechanization there are several points to keep in mind:

1) Mechanization does not necessarily mean increased production. Mechanization increases the productivity of agricultural labor, but not necessarily the yield per acre. While the productivity of agricultural *labor* is higher in the U.S. because of mechanization, the productivity of *land* in China is higher because of intense cultivation. While it is essential to increase agricultural labor productivity, China cannot afford to do this at the expense of decreased yields per acre. Total agricultural output must continue to increase if China is to meet its overall economic goals. Thus breaking up large tracts at the expense of U.S.-style tractor farming may be a reasonable consideration.

2) Agricultural modernization is much more than a problem of mechanization. Increasing yields through scientific farming (which may or may not involve machinery), diversifying the local economy to decrease rural underemployment and absorb people displaced by mechanization, and increasing agricultural labor productivity are all integral parts of a modernization program. In the long run, methods that will increase the labor productivity of the countryside will be crucial in clos-



Couple in their new home.

ing the gap between town and country. Mechanization where conditions are suitable (and such conditions do not exist in many parts of China) is therefore only one tactic to be used in a modernization strategy.

3) The above arguments aside, there are strong indications that mechanization in agriculture is on the rise. Recent statistics show a major spurt in the sale of agricultural machinery in 1981, after a lull in the first two years of the responsibility system. While most sales involved small agricultural machinery, large machinery is also being sold. Some of this machinery is being used to fill agricultural service contracts where individuals or small collectives provide mechanized farming services to household farmers without their own machinery.

A third objection that has been raised is that the responsibility system is leading to polarization in the countryside between rich and poor households. It is true that a few peasants have become very rich through the "shrewd" utilization of opportunities presented by the system. Examples of farmers buying expensive foreign cars or trucks have received attention in both the Chinese and Western press. It seems to me, though, that these examples are more suitable to *Ripley's Believe It or Not* than a representation of real conditions in China. In fact, the statistics for 1982 argue strongly against any real degree of polarization. In 1978, one-third of all rural households were making less than 100 yuan per capita annually. By 1982, this lower income stratum was reduced to

A few peasants have become very rich under the new system, but statistics for 1982 argue strongly against any real degree of polarization.

Collectivization imposed on pre-modern agricultural conditions is no closer to socialist agriculture than a system relying on individual producers.

2.4% of all rural households. Let's look at the following table comparing rural per capita incomes in 1978 and 1982*:

Income Bracket (RMB per capita annually)	1978 (percent of rural households)	1982 (percent of rural households)
less than 100	33.3%	2.4%
100 to 200	49.3	24.4
200 to 300	15.0	37.0
more than 300	2.4	36.2

*(The 1982 figure for households making more than 300 yuan per capita further breaks down into 29.5% making between 300 and 500, and 6.7% making more than 500. Per capita income brackets are "net" income brackets.)³

The 1982 figures show more incomes weighted towards the upper end when compared with 1978, where income clusters around the 100 to 200 range, weighted towards the lower end. If one is to be concerned about income polarization in Chinese society as a whole, then it should be noted that the highest bracket in 1982, which encompasses less than 7% of all rural households, is still less than the average annual income of an industrial worker on the lower end of the pay scale (There are reports, though, that in some parts of China, rural prosperity is attracting people *back* from the cities).

Related to this criticism of "polarization" is the concern that the responsibility system has the potential to lead to "land-lordism." It is argued that public ownership of land does not rule out landlordism growing out of large contracted plots of land, where the individual contractor becomes a "landlord" with respect to poorer households who actually work the land. I would not rule out the possibility that something of this type might occur in a few instances, but it would seem to me that neither the objective conditions nor the framework of the responsibility system would encourage its development into a significant phenomenon. First of all, the kind of polarization needed to create conditions for tenancy does not exist. The number of poor households has gone way down. Secondly, with the right of any household to contract land, why should they become tenants?

The ideological impact of the stress on individual initiative and increasing individual wealth is yet another area of concern with respect to the responsibility system. The emergence of an outlook that takes the form of acquisitive individ-

Shanghai is China's largest city.

K. WING





New rural policies aim to transform China's economy, which is still very poor.

ualism without concern for collective interest or the needs of the society as a whole is certainly a possibility and would cause serious social and political problems in the not-too-distant future. On the other hand, I feel there is a positive aspect to this emphasis on individual interests on an ideological level: by strengthening the concept of individual responsibility and individual interest, the prospects for greater democracy are also enhanced. Unquestioning attitudes towards authority, a “follow the leader” mentality, a resignation to the “powers that be” are aspects of an outlook deeply rooted in Chinese feudalism. This outlook has not been eradicated, despite 35 years of socialism, and has hampered the development of strong democratic institutions and greater pluralism in Chinese political life. If the responsibility system can truly begin to break down this outlook, the negative aspect of fostering individualism may be far outweighed by the positive.

Finally, there has been a tendency to lump many of China's rural problems together and blame them on the responsibility system. It is important to remember that the responsibility system is being implemented in the countryside at the same time as a whole range of economic, social and political reforms throughout Chinese society is taking place. The re-emergence of many “backward” practices in the countryside during the course of implementing the responsibility system, such as lavish traditional weddings and funerals, for example, stems mainly from the strengthening of constitutional rights and the fact that decades of ideological campaigns have not been successful in rooting out certain old practices.

The responsibility system in China's countryside is one

I would not agree that the responsibility system is inherently superior to collectivization — both are legitimate options for socialist agricultural policy.

The most important thing in looking at China, particularly for American observers, is that socialism in China must be aimed at modernization and industrial development in order to improve people's lives.

Small-scale industry in the countryside provides jobs for many Chinese peasants.

UNITY PHOTO: REESE ERLICH



approach to the problem of socialist modernization. In theory this series of policies and new institutions is no more and no less compatible with a socialist framework than the earlier collective system. Both sets of policies were basically designed to increase agricultural output, modernize agricultural production, generate funds for investment in industrial development and improve living conditions. I think that the reason some people see the responsibility system as a resurgence of capitalism in the countryside is because of certain subjective views they have about collectivization. Collectivization is often associated inseparably with socialism and with an element of moral and ideological superiority. In order to understand the role of the new reforms in China's socialist development, these views about collectivization must be overcome.

Collectivization is only one of several options open to a socialist country in agricultural policy. Despite its superficial manifestations, collectivized agriculture imposed on pre-modern agricultural conditions is no closer to modernized, socialist agriculture than a system that continues to rely primarily on individual producers. The basic way farming is carried out is the same in both cases. Let me use an analogy to stress this point: if the shoe industry, for example, is at a level of development where it is still carried out by individual cobblers in separate workshops, putting them all into one big room does not necessarily mean that their production has been "socialized." A modern shoe factory with a division of labor is a qualitatively different phenomenon. There may be very good reasons why cobblers should be encouraged to share materials and tools and to help each other out, just as collectivizing agriculture may have very valid reasons. However, such efforts at collectivization do not in and of themselves lead to modern, let alone socialist, production.

Because of the level of the development of the economic forces, agriculture in China is still based on the work of individual producers, whether or not they are collectivized. This is part of China's objective reality, and it can only be changed through mechanization, scientific farming and even newer forms of agricultural technology. The past grumbling of Chinese peasants about "everyone eating from the same pot" (referring to the collective system of income distribution, where income was not linked directly to output) has its roots in the individual character of agricultural production, and not in anti-socialist attitudes, backward ideology or



Village in Yanbei, northern China.

human nature. Collectivization does not change this basic method of production; it imposes a strong social discipline on individual producers. A farmer in a collective can always muse, "If only I had my own piece of land. . . ." A factory worker does not have the objective basis to entertain the equivalent kind of thought.

At the same time, I would not agree with the view that the responsibility system is inherently superior to collectivization, as some articles in the Chinese press tend to imply. I think both are legitimate options for socialist agricultural policy, and which is best depends on the concrete conditions to which they are applied.

The most important thing to keep in mind in looking at China, particularly for U.S. observers, is that socialism in China must be aimed at modernization and industrial development in order to improve people's lives. This is the biggest task that faces the socialist system in China today. Socialism in the U.S. would not face this problem. This difference necessarily makes U.S. and Chinese visions of socialism worlds apart for the time being, and requires mutual respect between Chinese and U.S. Marxists.



K. WING

New apartment buildings
in Beijing.

1. Part of the increase in per capita income must also be attributed to the increased state purchasing prices for agricultural products. 2. These per capita income figures are "net" income that excludes agricultural produce consumed by the household. Real income, therefore, is higher. 3. Compiled from figures presented in *Beijing Review*, Vol. 27, No. 18, p. 16.

What Can We Learn from the CPUSA's History?

For 15 years, beginning early in the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) was the dominant force on the U.S. left and a major force in U.S. society. It was instrumental in the historic drive to unionize basic industry. Its mass organizing helped force adoption of unemployment insurance, social security and other social legislation. It contended for leadership in the Black Liberation Movement. It had an enormous impact on intellectuals. It came to wield real power in the Democratic Party, especially in several states

where it helped forge progressive political machines. At the height of its influence it shaped government policy, touched the lives of millions of people and won thousands to support the struggle for socialism.

With the end of World War II came massive official repression. Aided by the party's own internal weaknesses, the McCarthy era red hunts reduced the CPUSA to a shambles by the mid-1950s. It was more than ten years before the U.S. communist movement began to revive, leaving a broad gulf between two generations of revolutionary activists.

Peter Shapiro *has been active in the movement against plant closings and is a labor writer for UNITY newspaper.*

The gulf was all the wider because a new generation of communists who wanted to learn from the experience of the old had few places to turn for information. What little



The CPUSA supported the democratic forces in the Spanish Civil War prior to World War II.

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Communists helped organize hunger march on Washington, D.C., 1931.

there was to read, even the supposedly “objective” studies of professional scholars, was little more than Cold War propaganda. Its message, in a nutshell, was that U.S. communists were simply agents of the Soviet Union, with no legitimate role to play in U.S. life, and their suppression was both justified and necessary to “national security.”

In the last ten years, this “official” line has met a powerful challenge from younger scholars and activists determined to find out what the CPUSA was all about. There has been a flood of books on different aspects of the party’s work during the Depression and World War II. The most recent include Harvey Klehr’s *Heyday of American Communism*, Mark Naison’s *Communists in Harlem During the Great Depression*, and Maurice

Isserman’s *Which Side Were You On?*

Klehr’s book, unfortunately, is a throw-back to the old “orders from Moscow” school, revealing less about CPUSA history than about the current rightward trend in academia. But Naison and Isserman have given us a gold mine of information, raising questions as well as giving insights about the history of the CPUSA.

* * *

In 1929 the United States was hit by the worst economic crisis in its history. Officially, 12 to 14 million people were jobless, about as many as during the worst period of the “Reagan recession,” but back then it was at least 25% of the labor force. And there was no government relief or unemployment insurance to tide people over while they looked for work. Businesses failed and farmers lost their land. Evictions, hunger and outright starvation were widespread.

It was a worldwide depression. The international communist movement had expected it, believing it the inevitable outcome of the frenzied capitalist expansion of the 1920s. Communists felt the economic crisis would create a revolutionary situation in capitalist countries.

The CPUSA was, at the time, a small, struggling, inexperienced organization, less than a decade old. But it was confident that the terrible hardships of the depression would make U.S. workers see the need to overthrow capitalism, and drive them into the party’s ranks. The communists threw

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The Communist Party played a prominent role in demonstrations during the 1930s.



Emil Nygard, first communist mayor of a U.S. city, Crosby, Minnesota, 1933.

themselves into spontaneous mass struggles, calling for revolution and sharply attacking those who called for anything less.

Despite the party's optimism, important conditions for a mass revolutionary movement were lacking in 1929. When the Depression hit, U.S. workers had almost no organized voice. The entire left — not just the CPUSA — was weak and isolated. The existing trade unions were small and firmly under reactionary leadership, with no presence at all in the crucial basic industries like auto and steel.

Thousands were struggling for simple survival, and the communists stepped forward to provide leadership. If workers needed relief, communists helped organize “hunger marches.” If they walked off the job, communists showed them how to set up strike committees and draw up formal demands. If they faced eviction, the party would mobilize the neighborhood and physically prevent the eviction from taking place.

People welcomed the party's help, but short of revolutionary slogans the CPUSA had no strategy for building the working class movement that went beyond the needs of the moment.

Revolutionary strategy

By 1934, however, the experience of five years had taught the party some important things about linking immediate demands with longer range goals. They mounted ongoing campaigns, not just militant one-shot demonstrations. They led fights for union recognition, not just spontaneous

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walkouts. They made tactical alliances that they would have shunned a few years before. They were organizing people, not simply agitating.

That year saw communists provide crucial leadership to the historic San Francisco general strike. It saw Congress debate an unemployment relief bill that communists had drafted. It saw communists leading the struggle to force the American Federation of Labor to establish effective and democratic unions for workers in basic industry. It also saw the communists thinking seriously about struggling within the electoral arena, as widespread discontent spawned political candidates like Upton Sinclair in California and Floyd Olsen in Minnesota, who ran as Democrats but talked radicalism and

socialism.

While all this was happening in the U.S., Hitler had taken power in Germany. Increasingly, the international communist movement sought to build the broadest possible united front to stop the spread of fascism. The socialist Soviet Union appealed to the capitalist democracies to join it in “collective security” arrangements to defend against Nazi aggression. Without abandoning their commitment to socialism, communists tried to ally with bourgeois politicians like President Franklin Roosevelt in the U.S. in a common struggle against fascism.

Electoral work

Thus began the communist “heyday” Klehr refers to. In describing how the party



Members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: three thousand U.S. citizens fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

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extended its influence during the period that followed, Klehr cynically claims they were just riding Roosevelt's coattails, and they were effective because their political line had changed, on Moscow's orders, to make them virtually indistinguishable from liberal Democrats. In truth, it was the mass base the communists had already built up, and the effective independent work they had already done, that made an alliance with Roosevelt possible. In one of the few really useful chapters of his book, Klehr gives a sense of how effective this alliance had become by 1938. In California, Washington, New York and Minnesota, the CPUSA was deeply involved in the electoral campaigns of various left-wing Democrats, and in getting out the vote for Roosevelt. They built up

strong progressive political organizations whose usefulness was not lost on the president. Though the communists never openly acknowledged their role in these electoral campaigns, Roosevelt found it increasingly important to woo CPUSA support.

Klehr has less to say about the CPUSA's role in the historic drive to unionize workers in basic industry under the banner of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), but what the party achieved here was even more impressive. When General Motors workers launched their dramatic sit-down strike in late 1936, party cadre provided tactical leadership, and a communist, United Auto Workers Vice President Wyndham Mortimer, represented the strikers at the bargaining table. Communists edited the



The CPUSA led the fight to save the Scottsboro Boys, nine Black youth framed on rape charges.

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CIO's newspaper and served as its top legal counsel. Party organizers brought thousands of workers into fledgling CIO unions like the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, the United Rubber Workers and the Packinghouse Workers.

The victory of the CIO drives removed one of the biggest single obstacles to the growth of working class political clout in the U.S. It was a key element in the anti-fascist popular front the communists hoped to build. It gave the party a major role to play in U.S. life. And it gave millions of workers who had been on the edge of starvation a few years earlier a chance to earn a decent living with a semblance of security.

Work in Harlem

What did the party's day-to-day work among African Americans look like during these years? From Naison's account of their experience in Harlem, we get some wonderfully detailed answers.

As early as 1932, Naison says, the CPUSA emerged as a leading force in the Black Liberation Movement when it took up the cause of the Scottsboro Boys — nine Black Alabama teenagers being framed for rape. Its aggressive defense effort, far more effective than the cautious tactics of the NAACP, won it tremendous respect. As a multinational organization, its positive role in fighting for Black liberation gave lie to the claims of Black nationalists who had dominated Harlem politics in the 1920s.

From the first years of the Depression, Harlemites with landlord troubles or prob-



Earl Browder dissolved the CPUSA in 1944, saying there was no more need for a Marxist-Leninist party.

lems with employers or government agencies turned to the party for help. Black and white communists blocked evictions, led mass unemployed marches, fought for better medical care at Harlem Hospital and better treatment of Black children in the public schools.

Though they had widespread influence and respect among Harlem's masses, the communists got most of their prominent recruits from its intelligentsia. Talented artists and writers like Richard Wright got their careers launched with communist help, after having been repeatedly thwarted by racism and discrimination. The party used its political clout to get government money for community cultural workers and government jobs for Harlemites with white collar skills.

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Naison also shows some important weaknesses in the communists' work. In their eagerness to demonstrate that white workers were valuable allies of the Black Liberation Movement, white party cadre were often guilty of paternalism. This made it hard for masses of Black people who appreciated the party's work, and were more than happy to have white allies, to actually become active communists.

* * *

In Harlem and elsewhere, the communists' work was undermined by a more serious failing. They never did find a way to bridge the kind of mass revolutionary agitation they had done in the early 1930s with the broad united front work they did in the latter part of the decade, and again in the World War II

years covered in Isserman's book. The more their organizational influence grew, the more they tended to liquidate their independent role as communists, and the weaker their ties to the masses became. No sooner had they begun realizing the full potential of their tactical alliances with Roosevelt and CIO chief John L. Lewis than they began uncritically tailing them.

This contradiction became apparent during World War II, as Isserman shows. Throughout the war, the communists retained their positions in the CIO national office, and they gained unprecedented influence in the federal government. They used these positions to engineer a high-level deal which was supposed to insure uninterrupted war production without sacrificing the living standards of workers in the war in-



(Left) Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. (Right) Protest against McCarthy's frame-ups of Hollywood figures.

dustries, or threatening the organizational strength of the CIO.

The deal broke down because, despite all the talk of “equality of sacrifice” in the battle to defeat fascism, the capitalists took advantage of wartime conditions to intensify the exploitation of their workers and send their own profits soaring. When workers fought back, the CPUSA, unwilling to jeopardize its influence in high places, failed to back them up. Many workers who had won the right to union protection a few years before because of the party’s militant dedication now concluded that the communists could not be trusted to defend their rights.

Communists defeated

After the war, the communists were decisively defeated in a number of unions. Within a few years they had been expelled from the CIO. Their mass organizations collapsed under widespread government attack as the Cold War witch hunts began. Their leaders were indicted and jailed. Communists were smeared in the media, harassed by the FBI, fired from their jobs. Two party sympathizers, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were accused of being Russian spies and executed.

How could the CPUSA’s enormous accomplishments of the prewar years have been destroyed so quickly?

For Klehr, whose hostility to the CPUSA is unbridled, the collapse was inevitable since the party never had any legitimate political objectives to begin with, and served the needs of the Soviet Union rather than the



In 1936-37, the CPUSA led the historic Flint sit-ins which helped organize the U.S. auto industry.

U.S. working class.

Isserman, a social democrat, is sympathetic to what the party was trying to do, but argues that its commitment to Marxism-Leninism and the concept of a vanguard party cut it off from its mass base, and deprived it of needed flexibility in understanding a complex U.S. reality. The trouble with this argument is that a wide open mass socialist organization of the sort Isserman apparently prefers would be just as capable of making the sort of rightist errors the CPUSA increasingly made. But it could never have provided the kind of effective leadership that the CPUSA at its best offered to the working class.

Naison is closer to the mark when he suggests, towards the end of his book, that the party’s growing unwillingness to jeopardize

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its political alliances with the leadership of the CIO and the Democratic Party led it to temper its aggressive defense of the interests of the people of Harlem. Naison does not really analyze this politically, but he does put his finger on a sore spot. The communists began as political outcasts who pinned their hopes for revolution on the notion that the masses would turn to them out of desperation when capitalism had so destroyed their lives that they would have no alternative but revolution. By 1938, the party's effective and often heroic work to build the organizational and political strength of the working class had brought it close to a prominent

position in U.S. life.

If the CPUSA was seduced by this newfound respectability, it wasn't simply because "power corrupts." It was because the party had failed to analyze how its day-to-day work contributed to its long-range goal of working class revolution. Having lost its bearings, it was unable to develop its impressive gains into lasting victories. But it left a rich history from which the present generation of communists can learn a great deal. A half century later, a central task of the revolutionary movement in this country remains the building of a genuine communist party to lead the working class struggle.

Africa
Slave
mind memory
Birth
A land across
 the ocean
Blue Water
Green world
 Blood
 & Stopped Motion


These mixmatched slaves
they cooled
readjusted
the black
 forever
the white
 till the debt's
 paid
 (for them to
 become
 as new
 as we
 so they
 become
 the oversee's)

this world of
 limits
 twists
 & opposing
 forces

these elements
of constant
Change

What is yr world
& yr face
yr clock's
confession

Have you slept w/
 the constitution
 3/5ths of the darkness
spoke to

YYYYYYYYY  (18)

Amiri Baraka

What are
these
words

to
tell
it

all?

facts
acts
Do they have
their own
words?

¡Exacts!

The Scientist in love
w/ precision
but we need
this
we must have
it
the exact real
the concrete
what it is
& that whole
is story

UNITY PHOTO



Amiri Baraka



The Crossing *Painting by Tom Feelings*

refer to the records
thereby
dumb romance
it's lie
for a flag's
health
a class
stealth
to cover
its murder
its beatings

As a domestic
bleeding

a near by
tragedy.

We cd go to Dred Scott
for testimony
Henry Bibb
We cd ask Linda B
or Henry
The Box

We cd be drawn into
eternity
w/ David and his
Appeal

To speak of all
we have
feel!

Only reality
say
Where we will
go
It's tethers
Its' chains
Its' sick pricks
inventing
crushings
for our lives
a decoration
of horror
they cd define
& understand
they cd justify
our deaths
& torture
they cd be clean
& taking
a little
taste

Painting by Tom Feelings



Tom Feelings is a New York-based artist whose work has also appeared in THE BLACK NATION, Liberator, and Freedomways magazines.

As the lightning
tried to illuminate
Animal life

Their smiles even
chill us
mad poseur
posing as
the mad doctor
who is the original

American
Nazi
The southern Himmlers
& Goebbels, baked
in our dying

What the war
proposed
our entrance
as citizens
who once had been
slaves

This 13, 14 & 15 yr numbers
in the
lottery

This Freedman's Bureau
this 40 acres

as grounds for
identical
social
valence
political
economic

(not Sociology & Social Democratic
political
Bohemianism)

Revolution, The question
the answer

What revolution
cd not be
destroyed
bought
or postponed?

What revolution
cd not be
sold out?

All those
in the real
world

all those
that have
actually
been

The betrayal of Niggers was necessary
to welcome
Imperialism!

That was its condition
The Killing of
Nigger
Democracy

So Spain
its decorated
past
The Philippines, Puerto Rico
Cuba, the booty

The new era
amidst our sunlight
mass laughter
emancipation
The Paris
Commune

The Berlin meeting to divide
the Dark Places
Colonial Pie

What the Slave Trade
Wrought.

That one day the Heathens
wd actually come on the real
side — that they wd take our
hearts as funny valentines
That they wd stick our lives & history

in the toilet bowl
(toxic
waste)

& claim our
past
& future

As the Commune
smashed
dead

The rehearsals
for Buchenwald
& Belsen
carried out in the
American
South

Unwilling nigger actors
Heavy
Minstrels
this torture Birth
of the

Black Nation

The “rule by naked terror”

can not be called
Fascism
because we
are
Niggers



& that
is too
famous
for the likes
of
us

Fascism
wd come later
in Europe
(naturally)
& be well advertised

as an excuse
for Israeli
imperialism!

THE BLACK NATION

The Black Nation is a JOURNAL OF AFRO-AMERICAN THOUGHT, edited by Amiri Baraka. Contributors include major Black authors, poets and other cultural workers. *The Black Nation*, Volume 4, Number 1, available now, features analyses of Black liberation struggles in Africa and the Caribbean, a featured section on artist Vincent Smith, poetry by dub poets Mikey Smith, Linton Kwezi Johnson and others, and much more.

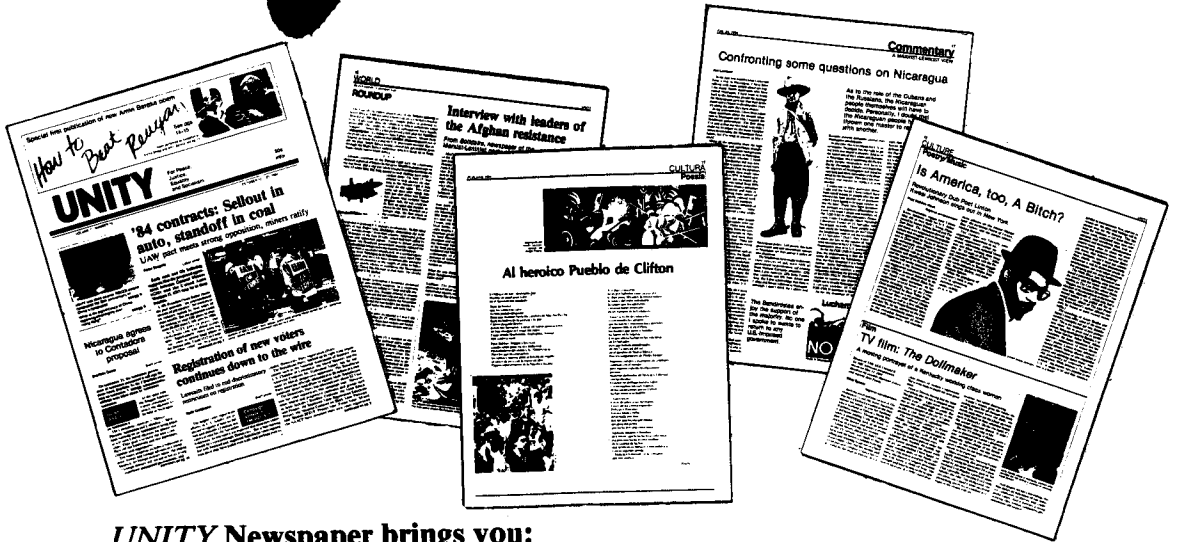
Vincent Smith: The Original Hipster as Artist



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Second Printing

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