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*The Working Class
and the
Class Struggle
in the
UNITED STATES*



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

"Motive Force of Modern History"

During May of this year, *Political Affairs* sponsored a conference on the subject of "The Working Class and the Class Struggle in the United States." Thirteen papers, presented during five sessions of the conference, addressed various aspects of the central question of the class struggle in the ideological arena—the situation of the working class and the nature of its struggles in contemporary society. The papers presented at that conference have since been prepared for publication and are collected in this special issue of *Political Affairs*. (Only twelve papers are included, since one of the reporters at the conference was, unfortunately, unable to prepare his presentation for publication at this time and asked that it be omitted.)

The papers presented during the three days of the conference dealt factually and analytically with the nature of the working class and its current struggles in the United States, and dealt polemically with various non-Marxist theories on this question. The theoretical cornerstone of the approach taken in all of the papers was stated by Henry Winston in his opening speech: "In the United States, as in all capitalist countries, the working class is the motive force of modern history, leading the fight against reaction, fascism and the ravages of capitalist oppression. It alone is capable of welding the kinds of alliances which can defend democracy, extend it and advance the anti-monopoly coalition. The policies of the Communist Party, based upon the science of Marxism-Leninism, must be further developed and flexibly applied so as to help our class understand its historic mission. The working class must travel this path, for this is the path that can lead it to the higher stage of transition to socialism."

As is inevitable in such a proceeding, some important questions were framed to which complete answers were not given. There also are some differences of emphasis and approach to some questions among the papers. Such differences, we believe, do not contradict the commonality of views on the central ideological question. In fact, it is concrete examinations of various questions, such as are presented here, which help to answer those questions posed in the course of struggle. Readers are invited to send in their own responses to the questions which are asked in these articles.

However, the purpose of the conference was neither to achieve final resolution of all such possible questions nor simply to achieve

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Opening Speech

I am highly honored to be here tonight. This seminar, organized by *Political Affairs*, is of great importance. It is devoted to a discussion of the problems of the working-class forces in our country.

The working class is the motive force of social advance. If guided by class struggle policies it can give effective leadership to all social forces fighting to bring about an anti-monopoly coalition.

In the United States, as in all capitalist countries, the working class is the motive force of modern history, leading the fight against reaction, fascism and the ravages of capitalist oppression. It alone is capable of welding the kinds of alliances which can defend democracy, extend it and advance the anti-monopoly coalition. The policies of the Communist Party, based upon the science of Marxism-Leninism, must be further developed and flexibly applied so as to help our class understand its historic mission. The working class must travel this path, for this is the path that can lead it to the higher stage of transition to socialism.

The editorial staff of *Political Affairs* is to be congratulated for organizing this gathering. The staff has been addressing itself to the new problems of our time, with the aim of improving the policies and tactics which can help to forge the solidarity of the class, and with this to strengthen its ties with all democratic and anti-fascist forces in the land. I am certain that this seminar will be of great help in our fight for the unity of the working class in the struggle against state monopoly capitalism.

In looking at the book review section of the *New York Times* a week ago I saw that one of the writers had noted the fact that there is today a searching, a looking for the Communist Party—a movement which, as he puts it, extends “from Angelo to Angela”—from Angelo Herndon to Angela Davis. This is a very significant observation. It is a sign of the times. It seems to me that it will be useful to see in what kind of period it is being made. Tonight’s papers, which will be presented by Hyman Lumer and Barry Cohen, will serve as a basis for the discussion of such questions.

The Setbacks of U.S. Imperialism

U.S. imperialism is receiving setbacks, powerful blows by the world anti-imperialist movement. There is the growing strength of the most powerful revolutionary currents in the world. There is the socialist community of nations in whose van is to be found the great Soviet

Union, united with the national liberation movements of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and with the peace, democratic and labor movements in all the capitalist countries in the world. The mounting strength of these forces is an unprecedented development. And not only is world imperialism in general receiving powerful blows, but the leader of all the imperialist forces, U.S. imperialism, is being increasingly pushed back. True, U.S. imperialism still finds maneuverability, but it is a maneuverability which cannot reverse the trend of history, the march of progress led by the working class in general and by the section of the working class holding state power in particular.

Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, who is perhaps the ablest ideologist of the bourgeoisie, is compelled to take note of this development, even though he consciously fails to point out the reasons for the position in which U.S. imperialism finds itself. But some of the things that Mr. Kissinger says are interesting. He notes, for example, that in Europe there is a new revival and that a process of unification is taking place on the continent. He points out that Europe no longer has to depend on U.S. imperialism. Mr. Kissinger states that we cannot ignore that. But he does not tell us that socialism is developing apace and that there is at the same time a tremendous socialist market which no one could ignore—and that Europe is not ignoring it.

He tells us, secondly, that between “East and West” there has taken place a shift in the strategic military balance, whose preponderance formerly lay with U.S. arms and installations, in such a way that there is now near equality of the two. What a powerful admission! Mr. Kissinger says that we cannot ignore this fact. Then, third, he tells us that in Europe there is a growing national identity and at the same time a growing national rivalry—in our language, imperialist rivalry.

Fourth, he tells us that the generation of youth which was born since the Second World War and did not experience it is less committed to the unity which brought about what he calls a detente in Europe. Let us ignore this falsehood, which alleges that these youth are less committed to the unity that is necessary in the new situation. It should be put plainly that the youth born since the Second World War have rejected the policies of containment, the theories of a George F. Kennan. They have rejected the idea of anti-Communist, anti-Soviet “unity.”

U.S. imperialism is undertaking to make a concession here and there in efforts clearly designed to maintain its position of dominance. Kissinger asserts that there is a need for a new charter and that the

United States should be a part of it but not a prisoner of it. Thus, the dream of U.S. imperialist dominance continues under the new conditions.

Proper answers to these mouthings of the imperialists can be found only in the antimonopoly and anti-imperialist struggles of the working class of the United States. What we are witnessing now is the sharpening of every single contradiction in the world. It is an understanding of these contradictions and with it a growing conscious struggle on the part of a united working class in general and the increasing leadership of the Communist Party in particular which can direct present and future events into channels which can enhance the position of the masses.

What we have in Watergate is an expression of the intramonopoly contradictions which are aggravated and take this form only because of the sharpening of all the other contradictions operating on a world scale. It is impossible in this period to separate them one from the other. The Watergate revelations have only opened the door a crack. To the extent that it is opened there is revealed the barbarity, corruption and degeneracy of a system which can be changed only by the intervention of the working class. To this intervention the present seminar undertakes to make its contribution.

There are some who look at Watergate as being simply a boil which, once opened, will quickly heal. But we are not dealing with that kind of thing. The plain fact is that the problem facing our country and our people is equivalent to a cancer which is terminal. The capitalist system is decadent and dying. There cannot be any kind of cure or healing process for it. The working class alone is the healthy organism which provides the necessary motive force to bring about the freedom of our class and our people, building the anti-monopoly government as the strategic goal which is the foundation for the transition to socialism.

The problems in present-day U.S.A. are many and complex. There are some who assert that this creates a dilemma within the ranks of the working class. But this is not so. We are dealing with soluble problems. And the collective efforts of all the participants in this weekend gathering will be devoted to that task.

For Working-Class Unity

It is good that the starting point of the discussion is a rejection of concepts which state in essence that our working class is a reactionary mass. The conference is an answer to the Marcuses, the Sweezys and the Garaudy-type revisionists who have written off the working class

—and especially the U.S. working class—as a revolutionary force. Such an estimate is wrong with respect to the white majority in the ranks of the working class and it is especially wrong with respect to the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Indian and Asian workers.

A special feature of the U.S. working class is the presence of many diverse national groups within its ranks. This creates particular problems in welding the unity of the class. An illustration of this can be seen in the following situation.

According to the 1970 Census the median yearly income for white families in 1969 was \$9,961, while for Black families it was only \$6,308. Among certain national groups the medians were as follows:

Russian	\$11,554
Polish	8,849
Italian	8,808
German	8,607
English	8,324
Irish	8,127

(Source: Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports, Series P-20: Characteristics of the Population by Ethnic Origin*, March 1971 and March 1972.)

You will note that the median family incomes for these groups are considerably higher than that for Black families.

It will be recalled that President Nixon, during the 1972 election campaign, staged a demonstration on Bedloe Island, site of the Statue of Liberty, in which he made a special dramatized effort to win the support of the German, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian and other peoples. His appeal was based on an estimate that these forces could constitute the main base in the ranks of labor, each national group taken separately, in the furthering of his program.

But Nixon did not succeed in his effort. The laws of class struggle continue to operate and capitalist exploitation exists for these groups as well as for other sections of the working class.

It is of interest to note that what is given here is *median* income, namely, an income level such that half of all families receive income above it and half receive incomes below it. This means that the incomes of a great mass of families even within these national groups is far below the median. The “privileged” position occupied by some can at best become a retarding force for others. The struggle for a class position against the monopolies goes on in each national group. At the same time the monopolists seek to use one national group against another, even while they strive to unite them against the Black and other minorities. That is why I put the question in the

following way at the 20th National Convention of the Communist Party:

The apologists for monopoly in the ranks of the working class, on the one hand, help to stimulate narrow, divisive nationalism among the national groups—Polish, German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Hungarian, etc.—and develop antagonism among them, and on the other hand they consciously promote the idea of superiority of one national group over the other. Thus, each national group, taken separately or together, is inculcated with the monopoly poison of racial superiority, especially directed against the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Indian masses. This becomes another factor in retarding class consciousness.

End Discrimination

The building trades in the AFL-CIO are the backbone of opportunism in general and racism in particular. The following figures for Detroit, Michigan are illustrative.

<i>Building Trade</i>	<i>Number who are white</i>	<i>Number who are Black</i>
Boilermakers	450	3 (0.7%)
Carpenters	17,000	428 (2.85%)
Electricians	2,500	100 (4%)
Elevator constructors	243	1
Engineers	11,000	None
Iron Workers	1,670	None
Painters	3,500	125 (3.75%)
Pipefitters (Meany's outfit)	1,400	4
Plumbers	2,800	10
Sheetmetal workers	2,100	5
Laborers	9,300	6,500 (70%)

These figures speak for themselves.

The bulk of the working class, Black and white, in the city of Detroit is to be found in the UAW. This is the largest single mass of workers. But the central trades body, dominated by the opportunism and racism of the skilled craftsmen, delimits the action of the tens of thousands in such a mass production industry.

I do not think it is necessary to dwell upon this monstrous policy of discrimination against Black workers. I will only say that this conscious policy of exclusion of Black workers from the skilled trades applies equally to the Puerto Rican, Chicano, Indian and Asian workers.

The quest for unity of the class makes mandatory an all-out fight against this kind of barbarity in the labor movement, now being upheld by opportunists in general and the labor bureaucracy in particular. A correct fight for the unity of the class presupposes a fight against the special discrimination against Black workers and all other oppressed nationalities. This means raising to a new level the entire struggle for economic equality. The degree of understanding of this problem will express the level of anti-monopoly consciousness within the ranks of the working class. And class consciousness will be developed in proportion to the degree that this kind of inequality is combatted.

An examination of the hourly wages in the building trades further demonstrates the discrimination against the Black workers. For Detroit the figures are as follows:

Carpenters	\$7.40
Electricians	7.98
Plumbers & steamfitters	8.02
Painters	6.75
Laborers	5.40

What can we say about these figures? The Detroit figures are typical of the pitifully low percentage in these skilled jobs. But in the category of laborers, where the hourly wage is much below that in others, 70 per cent are Black workers. The wage gap between Black and white workers will remain as long as this discriminatory policy continues.

The struggle to close this gap is a struggle for economic equality. It is a concrete struggle against racism. It is a struggle to overcome one of the main obstacles to the unity of the working class in battle against the monopolies. If it is joined with a vigorous fight against the anti-Communism of the monopolies, it can serve to develop the kind of class consciousness needed in this period to make possible the attainment of our common goal.

A New Upsurge of Struggle

To achieve this all our efforts should be directed toward the basic industries—those industries which determine and will continue to determine events. Our future depends on what is done in these industries. Without this it is not possible to foresee basic changes in the life of the United States. We must undertake to organize the working class wherever it may be, but with the understanding that the future depends on winning the minds and guiding the activities of this

basic stratum of the working class.

There are those who say that U.S. workers are exceptional, that you can organize workers everywhere else but not in the United States. I think our history disproves this. We were told during the thirties that craft unionism was the thing and would forever continue to be so. But we fought against the Greens and before that against the Comperes, just as we fight against the Meanys and Lovestones today. And we were successful. When the economic crisis hit in the thirties the masses of workers, employed and unemployed, rallied to the call of the Communist Party and the basic industries were organized.

Since then the Communist Party has been battered by the forces of reaction. And to the degree that these forces were able to undermine the influence of the Communist Party in the shops and mines, to that degree were the standards of the working class undermined. There was an increase in speedup, union democracy was curtailed, the processing of grievances was slowed down, demands for wage increases met with more stubborn opposition by the corporations, and there was a renewed insistence on mandatory overtime against the unions' demands that overtime be voluntary.

The future can be seen in what is happening today. I have just left California where some 7,000 workers in an auto plant are engaged in militant struggle against the company on these issues. The union, composed mainly of young workers, is taking matters into its own hands. These are the kind of young workers who are operating in the union today. In one steel local after another we find a growing rank-and-file movement. Already there are many locals in steel challenging the policies of Abel. In auto similarly there is a growing rank-and-file movement including both Black and white. This is a most encouraging development.

In Los Angeles I came into a television debate with the executive secretary of the AFL-CIO on the issue of racism. He dared to defend the racism of the director of the Western Conference of Teamsters as it affects Chicanos. It is precisely this struggle which has already led to the development of a terrific rank-and-file movement in Los Angeles.

The coal miners offer an important example of a rank-and-file movement. And what is happening in Miners for Democracy, beginning with the struggle against Black Lung, is taking place in many unions throughout the country. And why is this so? The workers are not going to take it lying down. We are on the eve of great battles. We are on the eve of a period in which the working class will assert

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What Is the Working Class?

"Two Great Hostile Camps"

It is fitting that this conference takes place in the year which marks the 125th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, that historic document in which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels first presented to the world the basic program of scientific socialism. Few documents have so well stood the test of time. Despite the innumerable efforts to refute it or to bury it as obsolete, it remains as fresh and as essentially valid as when it was written. And it enjoys a far greater audience today than do the writings of its would-be refuters.

At the very heart of the *Manifesto* lie the concepts of class and class struggle. "The history of all hitherto existing society," its opening sentence states, "is the history of class struggles." (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, International Publishers, New York, 1948, p. 9.) With the advent of capitalism, it goes on to say: "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat." (*Ibid.*) And further:

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. (P. 15.)

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat alone is its special and essential product. (P. 19.)

And finally, it is this class, whose "movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority," whose historic mission it is to abolish capitalist exploitation and with this to abolish all exploitation.

"Liquidators" of the Working Class

Such is the working class as the *Manifesto* portrays it, and such is the concept of the class structure of capitalist society which is fundamental in a Marxist-Leninist theory. This concept has been under ceaseless attack almost from the day the *Manifesto* was written. Bourgeois sociologists and economists, petty-bourgeois radicals, pseudo-

Marxists and revisionists of all stripes—all these and others have labored to prove the working class nonexistent, obsolete or inconsequential. All have sought to repudiate, in an infinite variety of ways, the idea of the class struggle as the central force in social development.

These efforts continue undiminished up to the present moment. The *New York Times*, as its observance of the anniversary of the *Manifesto*, published a series of articles by Milovan Djilas, Herbert Marcuse, Frank Riesman and I. Crizan under the heading "Communism After 125 Years." All of these writers assert that the working class has lost its revolutionary role, that a working class in the sense of the *Manifesto* no longer exists. "Marx's proletariat," said Marcuse in a recent interview in *Der Spiegel*, "no longer exists in the industrially developed capitalist countries. And the role Marx once ascribed to the working class [that of gravedigger of capitalism] cannot be carried over to the present working class in these countries." (Quoted in Tom Emelyanov, "The Myth of the 'Vanishing' Working Class," *New Times*, No. 3, 1973.)

The basis of such conclusions is the idea that modern capitalist society has become what is variously termed a "mass consumption" society (W. W. Rostow), an "affluent society" (J. K. Galbraith) or a "consumer society" (Herbert Marcuse). Thanks to present-day production techniques the bulk of the working class, it is said, is provided with a quantity of material goods and a standard of living which removes it from the ranks of the poor. Instead of confronting capitalism as its foe, therefore, it becomes integrated into it and becomes its defender. According to Marcuse, "the Marxian concept implies the identity of the impoverished classes with the basic immediate producers, that is, with industrial labor. Such is hardly the case in the affluent society. . . ." ("The Obsolescence of Marxism," in Nicholas Lobkowitz, ed., *Marx and the Western World*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1967, p. 411.) Crizan, in his *New York Times* article, contends that workers may be capable of fighting for a sack of potatoes, but having once achieved a certain level of affluence, they become a force for defending the existing order. It is in this sense that "Marx's proletariat" is said to have disappeared.

Especially widespread among bourgeois sociologists is the notion that the working class is disappearing in a more literal sense, in that it is being increasingly absorbed into a "new middle class," thanks to the rising income levels of growing sections of the workers. This "new middle class" is being augmented also by the rising numbers

of white-collar workers, who make up a growing proportion of the labor force and who cannot be classified as working-class. What is left of the working class, therefore, is a dwindling body of low-paid manual laborers whose social role becomes increasingly insignificant.

Many sociologists reject the idea of class division of society altogether as being obsolete and not expressing the complex stratification of modern society. They propose instead a division into innumerable strata based on income level, education, occupation, social ties, etc., and the replacement of the basic contradiction between labor and capital by a complex system of conflicting group interests. C. Wright Mills explicitly rejects the class concept, saying:

Property as an objective criterion of class is indispensable to the understanding of the stratification of capitalist society. Alone it is inadequate and misleading, even for understanding economic stratification. In addition to property classes, which depend on the kinds and the sizes of property involved, we can usefully classify people who own no property in the means of production according to income classes. . . . In capitalist societies, among the immense majority who are propertyless, distinctions of status and occupation lead to or away from just those psychological and political consequences of economic stratification expected by Marx. To name only the most obvious, white collar employees, like factory workers, are without property and many receive less income; none the less to treat them together as one stratum, on the criterion of property alone is to abdicate any real effort to understand one of the most consequential facts of stratification in advanced capitalist societies. (*The Marxists*, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1962, pp. 107-108.)

"Post-Industrial Society"

Then there are those who advance the theory of the "new working class" supposedly created by the scientific and technological revolution—a body of professionally or technically trained individuals receiving relatively high pay, whose primary demands are not higher remuneration or better working conditions but rather greater participation in the management of production. Their struggle is not so much against exploitation as it is against alienation.

This idea finds its logical culmination in the concept of "post-industrial society," whose adherents range from Zbigniew Brzezinski on the Right to such New Left spokesmen as Herbert Marcuse here and Alain Touraine in France. The scientific and technological revolution, it is claimed, has given birth to a social revolution, to a new

stage of society. In this new stage, the seat of power has shifted from the capitalist class to a technocracy of scientists and engineers. Says Daniel Bell: "The weight of the economy has shifted from the product sector to the services; more importantly, the sources of innovation are becoming lodged in the intellectual institutions, principally the universities and research institutions, rather than the older, industrial corporations." (*Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, pp. 5-6.) And correspondingly, "if the dominant figures of the past hundred years have been the entrepreneur, the businessman, and the industrial executive, the 'new men' are the scientists, the mathematicians, the economists, and the engineers of the new computer technology. And the dominant institutions . . . will be the intellectual institutions." ("Notes on the Post-Industrial Society [I]," *The Public Interest*, No. 6, 1967.)

Touraine states that "economic decisions and struggles no longer possess either the autonomy or the central importance they had in an earlier society which was defined by the effort to accumulate and anticipate profits from directly productive work." "Growth results from a whole complex of social factors, not just from the accumulation of capital. Nowadays it depends much more directly than ever before on knowledge, and hence on the capacity of society to call forth creativity." (*The Post-Industrial Society*, Random House, New York, 1971, pp. 4-5.)

J. K. Galbraith speaks of a radical shift of power from the owners of industry to a "technostructure" consisting of the sum total of those with the technical knowledge and experience required by modern industry. It is this body, he says, which really controls the process of production today.

In this new stage of society the central conflict is no longer that between capital and labor but that between the educated and the ignorant. The clash today is between the professionals and the populace—in the terminology of Touraine, between a technobureaucracy (technocrats who have gained political power) and the mass of the people as consumers. The issues in the struggle are no longer primarily economic, but are political, social and cultural. "The crucial fact," says Touraine, "is that the 'labor issue' *qua* labor is no longer central, nor does it have the sociological and cultural weight to polarize all other issues along that axis."

To be sure, the class struggle does not disappear. But it has become increasingly a side issue. It is confined to bargaining over narrow economic issues between employers and unions which have become integrated into the system. Class status and the class struggle are

no longer decisive features of society.

Furthermore, according to Bell, the industrial proletariat is a vanishing species. By the end of the century, he predicts, the proportion of factory workers in the labor force may well be as small as that of farmers today, while the professional and technical class will be the largest sector. ("Labor in the Post-Industrial Society," *Dissent*, Winter 1972.) In this connection, one is reminded of the "triple revolution" school of the mid-sixties, which proclaimed that within the next few decades the march of automation would render the overwhelming bulk of the labor force superfluous.

Similar views are expressed by revisionists such as Roger Garaudy, who projects a "new model" of socialism based on the ascendancy of the intellectuals as a result of the scientific and technological revolution. Their alliance with the manual workers, he maintains, gives birth to an "historic bloc" which becomes the new vehicle for the passage to socialism. In addition to the previous demands for higher wages and improved working conditions, the "historic bloc" advances demands for participation in decision-making, and this, according to Garaudy, "opens up another vista in the struggle for socialism by way of transition from participation to workers' control, and from workers' control to self-management." (*The Crisis in Communism: The Turning Point of Socialism*, Grove Press, New York, 1970, p. 207.) This, in contrast to what now exists in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, he conceives of as the "true socialism" which is, moreover, arrived at by a gradual and painless process of evolution.

Thus are the working class and the class struggle quietly embalmed as society, guided by scientists, engineers and other professionals, proceeds to develop along new lines of rationality, peace and stability. The Marxist concept, if it was ever valid, is now long obsolete. So we are assured.

Underlying this sleight-of-hand is what may be charitably described as a rather fuzzy conception of the meaning of "class." It starts from a rejection of what is basic to the existence of classes, namely, the phenomenon of exploitation. A class-divided society is an exploitative society; in the socialist countries, where exploitation has been abolished, class distinctions continue to exist only as a temporary feature of the transitional period between capitalism and a classless, communist society.

The members of a society can be classified in an infinite number of ways—according to income, occupation, education, ethnic origin, religion, physical stature, etc., etc. Each of these has its own usefulness, depending on what questions one seeks to answer. But if we

wish to understand the process of social development we must proceed, according to the Marxist point of view, from the mode of production of the given society. It is this which gives the Marxist concept of class its singular meaning, as distinct from all the other systems of stratification proposed by C. Wright Mills and other sociologists.

How to Define the Working Class

From this standpoint, let us examine further the questions: What is the working class? Who belongs in it and who does not? Let us begin with Lenin's often-quoted definition of a class. He wrote:

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy. ("A Great Beginning," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.)

According to this definition, one's class status is determined by one's position in the established system of social production. How, in this light, is the working class to be defined? Engels, in a footnote to the English edition of the *Communist Manifesto* published in 1888, says: "By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor; by proletariat, the class of wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live." (*Op. cit.*, p. 46.)

As thus defined, the working class makes up an overwhelming and growing majority of the U.S. employed population. In 1929, according to the Census Bureau figures, wage and salaried workers were 66 per cent of the civilian labor force; in 1971 the figure was 84 per cent. To be sure, these figures are on the high side, since they include such categories as top corporation executives who are in reality members of the capitalist class. But the elimination of these would not greatly reduce the percentage. Certainly it bears out Marx's contention that the accumulation of capital means growth of the working class and the increasing polarization of society into a handful of big capitalists and a huge mass of proletarians.

But some will argue that such a definition is much too inclusive, that if we include in our definition the essential element of exploitation the working class must be more narrowly defined as consisting only of those involved in the production of material goods, those whose labor produces surplus value. Thus Georges Marchais, then deputy general secretary of the French Communist Party, in his report to the 19th Congress of the Party in 1970, stated that the working class "consists of the proletarians of the factories, mines, construction projects and fields whose activity at various stages of production participates in creating surplus value. Consequently, it comprises in equal measure the working people of transport, communications, wholesale trade, and technicians in production, draftsmen." (*Cahiers du Communisme*, No. 2-3, 1970, p. 50.)

To be sure, this places the creation of surplus value in its broadest terms. It includes the mental labor involved in production as well as the physical labor, and it includes the transportation of raw materials and finished products to their destinations as part of the productive process. However, it omits the mass of workers involved not in the production of surplus value but in its realization—workers in commerce, finance, innumerable service occupations and other areas. These are variously characterized by adherents of this view as "employees," as a "salaried," as semi-proletarians, as part of the middle strata intermediate between the capitalist class and the working class proper.

I believe that such a definition must be rejected on various grounds. To begin with, it does not conform with the conception of the working class advanced by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Marx does not thus separate production and circulation. On the contrary, he states that "the capitalist process of production, considered as a whole, is a combination of production and circulation." (*Capital*, Vol. III, Kerr edition, p. 37.) Speaking of the commercial worker, he says: "He creates no direct surplus-value, but adds to the capitalist's income by helping him to reduce the cost of realizing surplus-value, inasmuch as he performs partly unpaid labor." (*Ibid.*, p. 294.) Engels refers to commercial workers as "the commercial proletariat." (*Ibid.*, p. 355n.)

Lenin writes, in polemizing against the Narodniks:

... why judge the "mission" of capitalism by the number of factory workers, when this "mission" is fulfilled by the development of capitalism and the socialization of labor in general, in relation to which the factory workers play the role only of front-rankers, the vanguard. There is, of course, no doubt that the revolutionary

movement depends on the number of these workers, on their concentration, on the degree of their development, *etc.*; but all this does not give us the slightest right to equate the "unifying significance" of capitalism with the NUMBER of factory workers. To do so would be to narrow down Marx's idea impossibly. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 316.)

Elsewhere he states:

The small proprietor who is a farmer belongs to the same class as the manufacturer, or the small proprietor who is an artisan, and as the small proprietor who is a shopkeeper; there is no class distinction between them, they are distinguished only by their *occupations*. The wage worker in agriculture belongs to the same class as the *wage* worker in a factory or in a commercial establishment. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 39.)

Many additional quotations could be given, but these should suffice to make it clear that Marx, Engels and Lenin did not restrict the concept of "proletariat" to those workers producing surplus value.

The Nature of Exploitation

The essence of the concept of exploitation is not necessarily the direct production of surplus value, although this is its base, but lies in the extraction of *unpaid labor*, whether or not that labor produces surplus value. All who must live by selling their labor power are equally victims of capitalist exploitation. And it makes no difference whether one works for a private employer or for the government, that is to say, for the collective capitalist. The state is the instrument of the capitalist class for legalizing, maintaining and enforcing its system of exploitation. The cost of maintaining the state apparatus must be paid for through taxation, and the ruling class strives to keep its tax payments to a minimum while shifting the burden as much as possible to the masses of working people. It strives to do so also by extracting as much unpaid labor as possible from government employees, whether they be sanitation workers, teachers, transit workers, fire fighters or clerks in government agencies. And with the rise of state monopoly capitalism, making the state a direct instrument for swelling monopoly profits at the expense of all other sections of the population, the exploitation of wage labor through the state apparatus takes on new dimensions.

The same arguments apply in the case of those who would include in the working class only those performing productive labor. The term "productive" is used here not in terms of use values (for all

labor is productive in this sense) but in terms of *capitalist* production, of labor which produces profits for the capitalist. Marx defines it as follows:

That laborer alone is productive who produces surplus value for the capitalist, and thus works for the self-expansion of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive laborer, when, in addition to belaboring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, does not alter the relation. (*Capital*, Vol. I, International Publishers, New York, 1939, p. 509.)

This is spelled out further in his *Theories of Surplus Value*. Here Marx states:

In itself . . . this distinction between productive and unproductive labor has nothing to do either with the particular speciality of the laborer or with the particular use value in which this special labor incorporates itself. In the one case the labor is exchanged against capital, in the other against revenue. In the one case the labor is transformed into capital and produces a profit for the capitalist; in the other case it is an expenditure—one of the articles in which revenue is consumed. (International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 157.)

As examples of this distinction, Marx gives the case of a self-employed tailor engaged in making or repairing clothes as against one employed by a capitalist firm to do the same work, producing a profit for the owner, or a cook working for an individual family as against one employed in a restaurant.

Though he refers to production of surplus value in the quotation above, it is clear that by productive labor Marx means all labor which produces a profit, which increases capital, whether it produces material values or not. And in this sense virtually all who work for wages or salaries perform productive labor. Which is to say that they perform unpaid labor. On these grounds, too, it is incorrect to limit the working class to those who produce surplus value.

Finally, it must be noted that a definition of the working class cannot be based on ideological considerations. Membership in the class is determined not by the presence or absence of class consciousness but by one's objective economic status. On the contrary, it is that objective status which provides the basis for the development of class consciousness. Marx and Engels, in *The Holy Family*,

expressed it in these words:

. . . The question is not what this or that proletariat, or even the whole proletariat at the moment *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today. (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 53.)

In defining the working class as we have we do not mean to imply that it is either a homogeneous mass or a fixed, unchanging entity. On the contrary, it is, first of all, a complex body which can be divided into three main sectors: industrial workers, agricultural workers, and white collar and clerical workers. Each of these can in turn be subdivided. The various sectors have their own special problems and outlooks. But all are members of one class having in common the sale of their labor power and the performance of unpaid labor.

We have already noted that the basis of class division in our society is capitalist exploitation. But it is also necessary to note that in this country such exploitation is combined with the superexploitation of a large sector of the working class on the basis of national and racial discrimination. Hence the class struggle is intimately intertwined with the struggles of these peoples—Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, American Indian, Asian—against their special oppression. Especially is it tied to the Black liberation struggle. This is why the fight against racism among white workers assumes central importance in relation to the class struggle.

Women workers as a group also suffer discrimination and superexploitation. Accordingly, the fight for women's rights likewise plays an important role in relation to the class struggle.

The "Collective Laborer"

Secondly, the working class evolves and expands with the development of capitalism, with the growing socialization of production and ever closer interrelationship of the tasks of the various workers. Marx speaks of the evolution of the "collective laborer." He says:

The product ceases to be the direct product of the individual, and becomes a social product, produced by a collective laborer, *i.e.*, by a combination of workmen, each of whom takes only a part, greater or less, in the manipulation of the subject of their labor. As the cooperative character of the labor-process becomes more and more marked, so, as a necessary consequence, does our notion

of productive labor, and of its agent the productive laborer, become extended. In order to labor productively, it is no longer necessary for you to do manual work yourself; enough, if you are an organ of the collective laborer, and perform one of its subordinate functions. The first definition given above of productive labor, a definition deduced from the very nature of the production of material objects, still remains correct for the collective laborer, considered as a whole. But it no longer holds good for each member taken individually. (*Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 508-509.)

The continued expansion of capitalist production and exploitation keeps extending the bounds of the "collective laborer," drawing new groups into the productive process and proletarianizing them. Growing masses of white collar workers are drawn into the ranks of the working class and as science becomes increasingly a direct productive force, this becomes particularly true of scientists, engineers and other professionals. Added to this is the growth in the numbers of workers employed in an enormously inflated parasitic sector of finance, credit, advertising, stockbrokerage, etc., which develops apace as the cost of realization rises. And with the rise of state monopoly capitalism there takes place a proliferation of government employment.

Far from being diminished by this process, as the exponents of the "new middle class" would have it, the ranks of the working class are swelled by it. Of course, we must omit from the ranks of this expanding working class those in management whose primary function is that of an instrument of exploitation of the production workers, also those in government employ whose role is defense of the system of exploitation and oppression and who serve as instruments of their perpetuation. Nevertheless, it is clear that the predictions of the *Communist Manifesto* have been richly fulfilled.

The Fight for Working-Class Unity

Within the totality of the modern working class the industrial workers, by far the largest sector, continue, in Lenin's words, to "play the role of front-rankers, the vanguard." This is the sector which is concentrated in the biggest, most modern, most highly socialized forms of production. It is the most highly organized sector and the most militant. It is the focus of the class struggle. Other sectors join with it; however, they do so not as allies but as *members of the same class*. What is involved, therefore, is not alliances but class unity. The ruling class strives ceaselessly to disrupt that unity, to pit one group against the other—white collar against

blue collar workers, intellectuals against manual workers, men against women, older against younger workers. Most fundamental is the pitting of white against Black workers. The fight for working-class unity is therefore in large part the struggle to unite these diverse sectors around the industrial workers, Black and white.

In forging that unity the role of the vanguard party of the class—the Communist Party—is vital. It is the Marxist-Leninist party alone which can make clear to workers the community of *basic* interests of all sectors of the working class within the diversity of their immediate needs and concerns, and so help to defeat the capitalist efforts to divide them.

At the same time, the working class as a whole stands at the center of the democratic anti-monopoly struggles. Its allies are the Black and other oppressed peoples, the small farmers, small businessmen, intellectuals and professionals, women, youth. In these struggles, within whose framework the fight for socialism unfolds, the working class forms the vanguard. As Lenin writes in his *The State and Revolution*:

Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 403-404.)

Such is the character of the modern working class.

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billion per year for the needs of the people, government provision of jobs to all lacking work and of working age, government operation of plants shut down by private industry, raising minimum wages, reduction of the work week without reduction in pay, etc.

We do not set any limits on what may or may not be actually realized in capitalist USA. We are optimistic in that we consider that substantial gains can be won through struggle. But we are not blind to the continuous pressures of the ruling class to prevent any gains, and to whittle away or slash away those previously obtained.

Changes in the Composition of the Working Class

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, in the seminal work of scientific socialism, the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels asserted that what was then a rising class, the bourgeoisie, was also an historically mortal class. The bourgeoisie, they noted, by revolutionizing the means of production, accumulating and centralizing capital and transforming weak, scattered and primitive means of production into the powerful and highly social economic engine that is modern machine industry “forged the weapons that bring death to itself.” The fruit of the bourgeoisie’s passion for the accumulation of capital is the proletariat—“a class of laborers who live only so long as they find work and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital.” This proletariat develops in the same proportion as capital itself and consequently is “its special and essential product.” Therefore, in its legitimate offspring, the working class, the bourgeoisie also created “the men who are to wield those weapons.” And finally, Marx and Engels concluded: “What the bourgeoisie produces above all are its own gravediggers.” The validity of Marx’ and Engels’ whole theory of the inevitable revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat depends on the correctness of their predictions concerning the course of development of the working class.

With this prophecy of Marx and Engels hanging over their heads, it is small wonder that the capitalist class and its ideologists look upon the growth of the working class with trepidation and spare no effort to obscure or deny that it is indeed a growing social force whose position and development destine it to be the ruling class.

Let us therefore take an independent look at the facts concerning the development of the working class in the United States in the recent period.

Growth of the Working Class

From 1940 to 1970 the total labor force in the U.S. grew from 53 million to 82.9 million or by 56 per cent.* Of that increase of 29.9 million, 14 million or almost half accrued during the decade of the

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures are taken from decennial censuses of the United States.

1960s. Of the 82.9 million in the labor force in 1970 about 2 million were in the armed forces, 77.3 million were employed and 3.6 million were officially counted as unemployed.

But the rate of growth of different categories of workers told a more revealing story. Over the 30 years, the number of unpaid family workers declined over one million or by 72 per cent. The number of self-employed workers declined 3.9 million or by 40 per cent. The sharpest drop in the number of self-employed workers, both absolutely and relatively, occurred in the decade of the 1960s. On the other hand, the number of government workers (i.e. wage and salaried employees of the state) rose by 8.7 million. And the number of privately employed wage and salary workers rose by 27.7 million. The greatest growth in the ranks of wage and salary workers was registered during the 1960s. Total growth of wage and salary workers amounted altogether over the 3 decades to 36.3 million or 108 per cent.

In other words, the number of wage and salary workers grew at a rapid rate, both in absolute and relative terms, and more than doubled over 30 years. Its growth was not only fueled by the growth in the labor force, but also proceeded at the expense of the intermediate, propertied and self-employed sections of the population, portions of which disappeared through attrition or were cast down from their precarious independent perch by the advance of technology and the concomitant concentration of capital. And this tendency showed a marked acceleration in the latter decade of the period. Clearly, there is no solace to be found here for those who wish to wave the disappearing wand at the working class.

Occupational Structure

These critics persist, however, resting their case on the change in the occupational structure of the working class (or of the employed population). And it is undeniably true that marked shifts have occurred in the skill, educational and occupational makeup of the work force.

Of the 11 broad occupational groupings defined in the census, only 3 showed an absolute decline over the period 1950-1970. The biggest declines occurred in occupations connected with agriculture-farmers and farm managers, and farm laborers and foremen. Employment in these two categories declined by 4.3 million, or almost two thirds. As a percentage of total employment they fell from 12 per cent in 1950 to 3 per cent in 1970. Household employment showed an increase from 1950-60, but by 1970 it had fallen below its 1950

level. It now accounts for only 1.5 per cent of total employment. The number of non-farm laborers dropped in the decade 50-60, then rose barely above its 1950 level in 1970. All other occupational groups showed substantial increases in numbers. But the white collar occupations have shown a tendency to grow more rapidly than the blue collar occupations, and therefore have also enjoyed a rising proportion of total employment. On this is variously based the assertions that "bosses are multiplying more rapidly than workers," or that "the middle class is growing faster than the working class," or that "the economy is becoming a service economy rather than a producing economy." We have already seen from the last paper that there are no grounds for assigning the bulk of clerical, professional, sales and service workers, who in their overwhelming majority are salaried workers, to any class but the working class. But it is legitimate to ask, what role do they play in the working class? How is their social position being modified? What is the significance of their growth?

Before going into this question let us first examine that occupational group which as a whole stands closest to the bourgeoisie and most clearly apart from the main body of the working class, managers, administrators, officials and proprietors. While this group registered a numerical increase from 5 million to 6.4 million from 1950-1970, this represented a slight decline in their proportion of the labor force from 9 per cent in 1950 to 8.3 per cent in 1960 and to 8.2 per cent in 1970. Along with this a certain shift in the social position of some of this group is discernable. This is due first of all to the decline in the number of small proprietors simultaneously with the rise in the number of salaried managers. Secondly it is due to a change in the character of the work performed by managers. This can be illustrated by the following comparison: in manufacturing the percentage of managers and administrators has remained constant at about 5 per cent, while in wholesale trade the percentage of managers and administrators is now 15 per cent, down 5 per cent from a decade ago. A similar situation prevails in retail trade. The explanation is that in manufacturing, where class divisions are most highly developed, the managerial group is primarily involved in directing exploitation of the other employees on behalf of the owners. In trade, petty enterprise is still extensive, and therefore the task of administration of things has not been so clearly separated from the exploitation of persons. But these figures show that due to the increasing concentration in trade the small tradesman is gradually being levelled to the status of a rank-and-file employee. Certain anachronisms in classification arise due to the slowness of the names of categories to

reflect their reality as, e.g., the hundreds of thousands of grocery store "meat managers" or "produce managers" who actually "manage" nothing but pork chops or bananas.

Now let us look at the other white collar occupational groups. The most rapidly growing of these are the clerical workers, whose numbers doubled from 1950-70, and profession and technical workers, whose numbers increased 130 per cent over the two decades. Together they accounted in 1970 for 32.4 per cent—almost one third of the labor force. If one adds in sales workers they account for about two fifths of the work force. A part of these, e.g. most doctors and lawyers, some sales workers and others belong to the middle class and are outside of our immediate realm of interest. But a large and increasing proportion belong to the working class. For example, in 1970 83 per cent of all writers, artists and entertainers, 89 per cent of accountants, 96 per cent of nurses, 98 per cent of teachers, 98 per cent of engineers and 100 per cent of college teachers were wage or salary workers. Altogether 89 per cent of professional workers were salaried in 1970. For clerical workers the figures are even higher.

White Collar Employment

The reasons for the increase in the numbers of white collar workers are three-fold.

The first is the growing requirements for provision of services and social administration created by modern conditions of production. This has been met—to the extent that it has been met at all—by the intensified development of state-monopoly relations, and especially by the growth in government spending and employment. From 1950 to 1970 the number of people employed in public administration increased by 1.6 million or by 62 per cent. The number employed in schools and colleges increased 3.8 million or 190 per cent. The total increase in government employment amounted to 8.7 million—most of it white collar. Other government measures characteristic of state monopoly capitalism (high military spending, measures to stimulate the rate of growth of the economy and to increase productivity and the rate of exploitation) which also influence the development of the working class are beyond the scope of this paper. What is important to note here is that the growth of government employment has tremendously enlarged that contingent of the working class composed of rank-and-file employees of state and related bureaucratic institutions.

The second reason for increase of white collar employment is the rapid expansion in the branches of private industry which rely heavily

and often predominantly on these types of labor. This applies especially to the wholesale and retail trade industries and to finance, banking and services. But what I said before concerning the leveling effect which technological advance and centralization of capital have on the position of managers in these industries is ten times more completely applicable to the professional, clerical and other workers. At one time the corner store owner was owner, manager, salesman, clerk, and stockboy rolled into one. And if he bossed himself around, it might have been called schizophrenia, but one could not justifiably have called it class struggle. Today matters are quite different. The employer in a trade establishment is likely to be a component of monopoly capital, even a conglomerate like A&P, while the salesman, clerk, etc. have been transformed into exploited wage laborers. And those small owners who continue to exist today are also exploited by those same monopolies. Far from being evidence of the disappearance of the working class, workers in trade have developed into an important branch of the working class—a commercial proletariat. And with respect to workers in finance, there has also developed an extensive financial proletariat. The numbers of nonsupervisory employees in wholesale trade, retail trade and finance, which we may take as an approximate measure of the size of the proletariat, were in 1970 2.7 million, 10.4 million and 3.2 million respectively. In these branches of economic activity, it should be noted, a large bulk of workers continue to be employed in small establishments.

In as much as a slowly increasing portion of the work force is engaged in the marketing of goods and supplying of services, a decreasing portion of the work force is directly engaged in material production. This could only be made possible by the rapid increase in the productivity of labor in the sphere of material production—by what is popularly called the "scientific-technological revolution." And this is the third reason for the increase in the numbers of white collar workers—the structural change in the work force involved in material production.

Marx wrote that "in order to labor productively, it is no longer necessary for you to do manual work yourself; enough, if you are an organ of the collective laborer, and perform one of its subordinate functions." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, International, 1939, p. 517.) And with the advance of science and of productive techniques, a larger share of the effort expended by the "collective laborer" is skilled labor, either mental or clerical-administrative labor. In manufacturing, the main branch of material production, in 1970 10 per cent of the work force was composed of professional workers (mainly accountants,

engineers, technicians, etc.) and another 12.4 per cent were clerical workers. This compares with 2.7 per cent and 10.9 per cent respectively in 1950. In the most technologically advanced branches of industry the percentages are even higher. Today the number of professional workers in manufacturing is double the number of laborers, while in 1950 the number of laborers was triple the number of professionals. In other words, the advance in technology has multiplied the numbers of sections of the industrial working class, especially its office and technical and scientific sections.

Machine Operatives

But the facts also show that the outstanding feature of the structure of modern industry is the growth and continued predominance of the blue collar laborers, who today account for 63 per cent of the labor in manufacturing. It is chiefly with regard to the role of this group that Marxists part company with all varieties of opportunists, revisionists and other anti-Marxists. All of these gentlemen insist that automation is reducing the role of the factory proletariat.

Let us examine this point more closely.

Automation invests an ever increasing portion of productive functions in a machine. As a consequence of automation, a similar quantity of product contains less labor after automation is introduced than before, and fewer laborers are required to obtain the same result. That is the beginning. But for some it is also the end. By focussing attention on the impact of automation on a narrow segment of social production they attempt to prove that automation must diminish the role of the machine operative. Yet the facts show that between 1950 and 1970 the number of machine operatives increased by 2.3 million, or 21 per cent, despite an unprecedented growth in automation.

It is true that capitalism embodies a tendency toward automation and therefore toward a reduction in the work force. But it also requires accumulation of capital and growth of production and consequently a growth in the labor force. Which of these tendencies will predominate in a given industry, or in the whole of material production, at a given time cannot be determined *apriori*. But in either case, technical progress in the main is accomplished by appropriating the forces of nature through the increased use of machinery. When the number of manual workers is decreased, the number of machine operatives may simultaneously increase. The widespread application of automation brings the labor of sections of clerical, office and other white collar workers to increasingly resemble that of factory workers. This process therefore enhances the possibilities of achieving unity

between these different sections of the working class.

Where is the "fatal flaw?" How is one to explain the contradiction between this seductive theory of the "disappearing worker" and the facts? It can be explained by pointing out that the proponents of this theory, while playing up the fact that automation attenuates the labor in a given volume of material output, omit to mention that it simultaneously creates a growing demand for labor in capital goods producing industries. Thus between 1950 and 1970 the percentage of workers engaged in manufacturing durable goods increased from 53 to 59 per cent. They "forget" to mention that nonmanufacturing industries develop machine operations, boosting both the demand for the labor which produces the machines and the labor which operates them. Thus by 1970 the census listed 2.5 million machine operatives in nonmanufacturing industries. They "forget" to mention that technical progress and automation also invade offices, so that more than half of a million clerical workers are office machine operatives (though still counted in the clerical occupation). They conveniently forget to mention everything that explains the reasons behind the fact that scientific advance is constantly solidifying the leading role of the core of the proletariat.

Above all, they ignore that the increasing mass of functioning capital creates a tendency toward an increase in the mass of the proletariat, while the rising ratio of materialized labor to living labor consumed in production creates a constant tendency toward the displacement of living labor. It was recognition of these contradictory tendencies that Marx stated in his general law of capitalist accumulation: "The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the greater the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labor, the greater is the industrial reserve army." (*Ibid*, p. 659.) This "industrial reserve army" is at times generated through an absolute reduction of the numbers employed in a particular branch of industry. This is true in agriculture where over the past 20 years 3 million jobs have been eliminated and also in mining, where employment has been reduced sharply. It has also been true in particular branches of manufacturing, e.g. lumber and wood products and also food.

An increase in unemployment can also result from a relative decline in employment in comparison to the development of the labor power at the disposal of capital. A prime example of this is the relation of women to the labor force in the U.S. From 1940 to 1970 the number of men in the labor force increased by 12 million or 30 per cent. During the same period the number of women in the labor

force increased 17.9 million or by 140 per cent. Women have accounted for 60 per cent of the increase in the labor force since 1940, and during the decade of the 1960s they accounted for 65 per cent of the increase. This growth in female employment has not been the result of any lessening of discrimination against women but is mainly a consequence of the rapid growth of the branches of industry and occupations in which women have traditionally been employed (clerical and sales work, some professions and some branches of industry). Altogether 60 per cent of women are employed in clerical, sales and service work. But the number of unemployed women has risen at the same time because capitalism has even more rapidly developed the labor power of women through automation of housework, through rising educational levels, and through increasing economic pressures on the family by and other means.

Leading Section of the Working Class

Factory workers are the largest section of the working class. They are the most homogeneous component within the working class. They are gathered in the largest concentrations of any type of worker. These are the workers who directly face the biggest monopolies, who are best capable of waging a militant struggle against the monopolies, and whose labor is the mainspring of the entire economy.

But it is not only for these reasons that industrial workers form the core of the working class. They also hold this position because they are the most exploited section of the working class, supplying the greatest share of the bourgeoisie's profits. The bourgeoisie recruits into the ranks of industrial workers disproportionately from the most oppressed sections of the people in their drive to lower wages and increase the rate of exploitation. This is an inescapable necessity for the capitalists since the degree of exploitation of the workers in material production is the key to the existence of the whole bourgeoisie.

Let us take as the most graphic and important example of this the growth of the numbers of Black workers. In 1950 18.5 per cent of the Black labor force were employed in agriculture, 13.6 per cent were nonfarm laborers and 15.1 per cent were private household workers. In other words in 1950 47.2 per cent of Black employed persons were concentrated in areas of employment which were to be hardest hit by technological advance. Between 1950 and 1970 over one million jobs held by Blacks were eliminated in these categories. At the same time total employment of Blacks rose by 2 million. The growth of Black employment over the two decades was propelled by the drive of capital to maximize the profit which could be made by

the superexploitation of the labor which was being "freed" from its means of livelihood. The biggest single field of growth in Black employment occurred in profit making private enterprises—800,000 in manufacturing alone and that mostly in heavy industry. As a consequence of this Black factory workers rose from 9 to 13 per cent of all factory operatives. Black operatives rose from 18.6 to 24.3 per cent of the Black labor force. The numbers of Black workers also grew in government employment, in service industry, in retail trade and other areas. But high unemployment rates, continuing insecurity of employment, and entrenched patterns of discrimination defended at all costs by capital continue to make of Black workers a pool of super-exploited labor. This growth of the number of Black workers has led to an objective tendency toward a closer linking of the objectives of the Black liberation movement with those of the working class movement as a whole. It also has created more favorable conditions for the attainment of Black-white unity in the struggle against racism and in the general class struggle.

A similar type of pattern of development has occurred with respect to the other largest racially and nationally oppressed groups—the Chicanos and Puerto Ricans.

The number of women employed in industry has increased due to the change in the occupational structure of industry. But during the last decade capital has also begun to increasingly utilize low wage female labor as factory operatives, including in basic industry. In auto, e.g., there are 70,000 women operatives, 15 per cent of the total.

The region of the country which has undergone the most rapid industrial development—and consequently where the working class has grown most rapidly—is the South, the formerly most backward and still most poverty-stricken and lowest wage region.

In other words, because the working class—and its industrial core in particular—is the most highly exploited section of the people it has become steadily more representative in its composition of the whole of the people most oppressed by monopoly. It is therefore better able to articulate the demands of the whole people and to unite the whole working class and all working people in a militant struggle against their exploiters.

To summarize: the main tendencies in the development of the working class in the U.S. in the most recent period have been:

- 1) Growth in the numbers and increase in concentration of the working class. Progressive proletarianization of the nonworking class strata.

2) Formation or enlargement of contingents of the working class on a large scale in trade, finance, industry, service and state employment.

3) Growth, consolidation and strengthening of the leading role of the industrial core of the working class.

4) Changes in the racial, national, regional and sex composition of the working class—and most markedly of its industrial core—in a direction which makes it more representative of the whole people.

Lastly, increasing complexity in the structure of the working class, resulting in multiplication of its creative abilities, enlargement of its social and political horizons, and increasing concentration of all productive activities in its hands. Differences in outlook, experience and immediate interests form a material basis also for possible conflicts among the different sections of the working class—an aim which the ruling circles are working overtime to realize. An outstanding example of this is the attempt to maintain a segregated pattern of suburban development in order to create an institutionalized source of conflict between Black and white workers and maintain Black workers in a superexploited status.

But the words of the *Communist Manifesto* best summarize the overall development of the working class in the U.S. during the last period. It is the class in whom the historical movement is increasingly being concentrated, a class that holds the future in its hands.

(Continued from page 8)

itself as never before, on a plane higher than in the period of the thirties.

In the course of the struggle all of the so-called difficult questions are going to be answered, just as they were in the thirties when an end was put to the open shop. The workers will reverse the class-collaborationist policies of Meany and company. The organized sector of the working class will help to facilitate the movement for the organization of the unorganized in general and in the South in particular.

The approach to the solution of these questions will be placed before you tonight in the papers of Hyman Lumer and Barry Cohen. Thank you very much.

The Status of Women Workers

Over 32 million women, or four out of every ten adults, are currently working in the U.S. Women make up 38-40 per cent of the total work force. This means that more women are working in 1973 than ever before in our history, even at the height of World War II, and the trend continues upward.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that between 1960 and 1970 almost 12 million people were added to the work force and that 65 per cent of these were women. While women continue to hold a major and often predominant place in "traditional" women's occupations, in light and service industries, there is an increasingly significant move toward medium and heavy industry.

For example, according to the Census Bureau, over a million and a half new operatives—meaning skilled and semi-skilled production workers—were added between 1960 and 1970. Of these, 890,000 or 58 per cent were women. In the same period, of 338,000 new laborers nearly 175,000 or 51.5 per cent were women. Of 83,000 bus drivers added in that period, 53,000 or almost 73 per cent were women and nearly two million of the more than three million additional service workers are women. There has also been a shift toward white-collar and professional work as well as toward the service industries.

The most significant development, however, is the increase in the numbers of women entering into heavy, basic industry. Due to the technological revolution and to the pressures and demands by women themselves, women are reentering and going beyond the jobs they held during World War II, in basic steel for example. In steel fabricating and aluminum, women make up from 20 per cent of the work force to 60 per cent and even more. And in auto, there are more women than in steel. In several auto plants some departments are predominantly staffed by women and some plants have even appointed women as foreladies. In the electrical and communications industries women are a majority, with large numbers of Black women among them.

One analysis of women as a percentage of total workers is selected nonfarm occupations taken from *The Changing Labor Market and Women* (U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,

December 1972) shows that as of April 1972, women were:

- 97 per cent of all private household workers;
- 76 per cent of all clerical workers;
- 61 per cent of all retail sales workers;
- 57 per cent of all service workers;
- 40 per cent of all professional workers;
- 30 per cent of all operatives (skilled and semi-skilled production workers);
- 17 per cent of all managers;
- 15 per cent of all nonretail sales workers;
- 3 per cent of all craftsmen.

Women, therefore, are engaged in a great variety of jobs, many of them essential to the operation of the total U.S. economy. Women are one-third of the operatives in the factories that produce goods needed by our society, especially electrical products and textiles, but also steel, automobiles, chemicals, clothing and others. Three out of every four clerical workers are women and the work done is essential to accurate record keeping of all kinds and to the distribution of goods throughout society. Women are well over half of all service workers in hospitals, public utilities, laundries and so on. In addition, women are teachers, social workers, technicians and professional workers of all kinds.

Consequently, historic shifts are taking place in the lives of U.S. women. Economic necessity—the need for more than one wage earner in most working class families—and rising social consciousness are moving women into the direct production processes in tremendous numbers. The scientific and technological revolution, the widespread employment of office machinery, the growing use of computers and data-processing machines, all bring new possibilities for women. They also bring changes in the outlook, thinking and psychology of all workers and move in the direction of greater working-class consciousness. This process is breaking down the old distinctions between so-called “women’s jobs” and “men’s jobs.”

More and more women today are joining unions. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in the two years between 1968 and 1970 the number of women union members rose 342,000 to a total of 4.3 million. About one out of every five union members is a woman. In 26 unions women are at least half the membership. In eight unions women are six out of every ten members. Unions with the largest numbers of women are the International Ladies’ Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Union of

Electrical Workers, the Retail Clerks, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the United Automobile Workers, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Steelworkers of America and the International Association of Machinists. The Drug and Hospital Workers Union, Local 1199, has a very high proportion of women in its membership. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, one of the fastest growing unions in the country, also has large numbers of women members. The two national teachers’ organizations, the AFT and NEA, have large numbers of women. Furthermore, as women enter into occupations and industries traditionally closed to them, they are also becoming members of the unions in those industries. Consequently there are women in the Carpenters Union, the Firemen and Oilers Union, the Woodworkers, the Boilermakers, the Distillery Workers, the Painters, the Seafarers and the Rural Letter carriers.

Still, over 29 million working women, the overwhelming majority, are unorganized. Women often make up the majority in some of the largest unorganized plants in this country. This means that they are without even minimal protection. Those women workers who are not union members earn \$1,540 per year less, on the average, than those who are members of unions. Among the unorganized women workers are 1.7 million retail sales workers, as well as millions of office workers and agricultural and private household workers. And the overwhelming majority of these last two categories are Black, Chicana and Puerto Rican.

Black and Other Oppressed Minority Working Women

In studying the special problems of women workers, it is particularly important to examine the status of Black women, also of Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian women. The working-class exploitation which is the source of women’s oppression and the racism which is the main source of division among all workers have an even greater effect on Black and other nationally oppressed women in the labor force. Black women in particular have been uniquely exploited and oppressed under capitalism from the days of slavery. Historically, Black women and their families have been kept at the very bottom of the economic ladder. They have been forced to go to work in far greater proportion than have white women. They have been forced to accept the most menial, unrewarding, low-paid, generally unorganized jobs. In addition, racial discrimination and racist practices that victimize Black women become

the rationale for according the same treatment to Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American and Asian women in our society. Thus, job opportunities, education and job training are even scarcer for these women than for white women. In addition it is their families, again thanks to racism, that are most often in need of more than one wage earner in order to make ends meet.

A breakdown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the jobs held by white women and women of oppressed minorities shows the effect of racial discrimination.

MAJOR OCCUPATION OF WOMEN WORKERS, BY RACE, 1971

Occupation	Nonwhite	White
	100.0	100.0
Professional and Technical	10.6	15.1
Nonfarm Managers & Officials	2.4	5.4
Clerical Workers	22.0	35.6
Sales Workers	2.7	7.8
Operatives	15.4	13.0
Private Household Workers	16.5	3.2
Service Workers other than Private Household	27.0	16.0
Other occupations	3.4	3.9

(Source: *Facts on Women Workers of Minority Races*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Division, 1972, p.4.)

Here we see that about half of all white women workers are professional, technical or clerical workers as against less than 33 per cent of Black women workers. On the other hand, more than 43 per cent of Black women are in private household or service work, compared to 19 per cent of white women workers.

In basic industry, while women as a whole are excluded from many jobs, Black women are increasingly being hired for some of the hottest, heaviest, dirtiest and least safe jobs in the steel mills, auto plants, chemical plants and elsewhere. They are expected to accept jobs which employers won't even offer to white women on the grounds that they are too hard for them to do—a typical example of the blatant racial discrimination practiced by the big monopolies. Of course, most of these jobs are actually unfit for any human being, man or woman, and a fight is needed to force the companies to change these conditions for all workers.

In 1972 the unemployment rate for Black women 20 years of age and over by government estimates (which are highly conservative), was 8.8 per cent as compared with 4.9 per cent for white women.

Among Black teenagers of working age the rate is an incredible 35 per cent—or more than double the rate for white teenagers. Since many Black men are also underemployed or unemployed (their median income was only \$5,485 in 1970), the working woman's income is often a higher proportion of the total family income than is the case for white families. This, of course, creates much more severe problems of poverty for Black families than for the average white family. When the woman in the Black family is laid off, the whole family suffers more.

Black women are also more often the sole wage earner in the family than is the case among white women. This is due to a number of factors, but not to the instability of the Black family, a false concept promoted by the ruling class as the basis for a whole number of racist notions about Black families. Among the real reasons for this are the poor health and medical facilities and many other ills of poverty, the higher incidence of disability and death among Black men. Deaths from the Vietnam war and other wars have been proportionately higher among Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano men due to the fact that they are drafted and sent to the front lines in numbers out of proportion to their percentages in the population. Finally, inhuman and degrading welfare policies designed to break up families, together with unemployment and underemployment of Black men all help to account for the relatively large number of Black women who are heads of households.

Where Black women worked full time all year, poverty was four times greater than among white families. Where the women did not work at all during the year, more than three out of four Black families lived in poverty, as compared to 38 per cent of white families.

The picture varies only slightly for Chicano and Puerto Rican women. The discrimination is the same, the racism is the same, and the exploitation and oppression are the same. Only the utilization of national, cultural and historical differences by the bosses as a way of stifling protest and stimulating divisions varies somewhat.

For the 8-9 million Chicanos living mostly in the Southwest, Midwest and some other areas, the median annual income of men is less than \$6,000. For women, the figure is only about \$3,000. A Chicana garment worker in Los Angeles starts at \$1.65 an hour. A hospital worker in Arizona begins at \$1.55 to \$1.65 an hour, while a cafeteria worker starts out as low as \$1.25 an hour. Women who assemble parts for planes may start at \$2.00 or \$2.25 an hour and women who do arc welding, gas welding or assembly work in sheet metal plants at about \$1.75 an hour. Domestic workers earn less than \$1.00 an

hour. Any woman who protests may find herself deported to Mexico, often resulting in the disruption of families in cases where mothers are picked up and deported on the spot, without even being allowed time to get their children, who are left in the care of family and friends.

For hundreds of thousands of Puerto Rican women in New York City, their first job is in the sweatshops known as the "garment market." They are virtually excluded from the higher paying skilled jobs and most of them gross less than \$100 per week and often only \$65 and \$75 per week. Two out of five Puerto Rican women work and their proportion is growing too. Most of them are concentrated in low-paying jobs as factory workers. Very few work as clerical, professional or technical workers, as managers or in other higher paying job categories.

In low-income areas of New York City, Puerto Rican families headed by women had a median income in 1970 of only \$3,768 compared with \$6,488 for families headed by men. Four out of five families headed by women are forced to seek some welfare assistance in order to survive.

The officially estimated unemployment rate among Puerto Rican women living in low-income areas in New York City is the highest of any group in the city as a whole. It is 10 per cent for Puerto Rican women as a whole but well over 30 per cent for Puerto Rican women under twenty. This is especially significant since the Puerto Rican population in the United States is much younger on the average than any other group in the country—the median age only 21½ years.

Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican women in the United States have proven themselves consistent and steady forces on picket lines, in actions for quality, unbiased education, or in fighting for much-needed additional schools. They have given leadership in the fights for child care, for adequate welfare, for food stamps, and they have demonstrated their opposition to the war in Indochina. If we add to this experience in struggle the facts that a large percentage of women going into industry are Black and that there is a growing shift of Chicano and Puerto Rican women into production, including basic industry, we can understand why they are important as a leading and conscious component of the working class. It clarifies, too why corporate monopoly has singled out racism and male supremacy as its main ideological weapons for creating division among workers.

Characteristics and Problems of Women Workers

The 32 million women in the labor force represent a cross section

of women in the nation.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics publication, *Women Workers Today*, the percentages of women in various age groups who were workers in 1970 were as follows:

Age	Per Cent in Labor Force in 1970
16 to 19 years	44
20 to 24 years	58
25 to 34 years	45
35 to 44 years	51
45 to 54 years	54
55 to 64 years	43
65 years and over	10

Almost three fifths of all women workers are married and living with their husbands; more than one-fifth are single and the other one-fifth are widowed, divorced or separated.

While the number of women employed in industry, service and government continues to grow, the wages of women, instead of increasing relatively to those of men have dropped further behind. According to the President's Committee of Economic Advisors the average pay for women is now 60 per cent of that received by men. Although concentration of women in unorganized shops accounts for some of this disparity, unequal pay for identical or nearly identical work is the main cause. Superprofits resulting from unequal pay for women amount to billions of dollars a year. But in addition this huge gap between the wages of men and women workers is the result of exclusion of women from higher-paying job categories and the denial of promotion even when they have the necessary skills or could easily be taught them.

An important means of excluding women from jobs is to exclude them from apprenticeship training programs. In 1971 there were only 1,800 women enrolled in apprenticeship training programs in the entire country. In New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, for example, six out of ten women apprentices were being trained in only four fields: bookbinding, cosmetology, jewelry and lab technology. There were practically no women in such highly skilled, higher paying categories as machinists, draftsmen, plumbers, pressmen, printers, etc. The justification for excluding women from these trades is sought in the false stereotypes about women not being mechanically inclined, being physically weak and so forth.

But the trend among women is not solely toward jobs. Working women are also being forced into unemployment, and in greater

numbers than men. Capitalism depends upon this reservoir of unemployed workers as a bargaining tool against those workers who are employed, as an important means of holding down wages. Keeping women as a major component in this reserve army of workers makes it even easier to pit male workers against female workers.

The Housewife under Capitalism

Most women in the United States, however, are housewives, a status which remains the most effective way to keep women out of the job market while providing a rationale for failing to make housework and child care a social responsibility. Great confusion exists about the status of the housewife under capitalism; in fact, defining the housewife's status has given rise to one of the biggest debates in the women's movement, not just in the U.S. but in other countries as well.

The housewife, in addition to being an unemployed worker, also serves the function of providing necessary domestic labor to maintain the workers' needs and to bear and care for children. Therefore, she has an indirect relationship to social production. When women enter into the work force they acquire at that point a direct rather than an indirect relationship to production. The basic purpose of production in capitalist society is, after all, to produce salable commodities for profit, not to produce household services.

Monopoly goes to great lengths to conceal the fact that working-class housewives are in very large part unemployed workers. By forcing the family to depend primarily upon the husband's wages, monopoly perpetuates the myth that "women's place is in the home." In that way it keeps many women out of the job market and avoids responsibility for the extra burdens placed on the workers' families and on women in particular. Expenditures for child care, public education, health care, housing and other necessary social needs that should and can be public services, even under capitalism, are opposed and blocked because they don't produce profits.

Consequently, when the housewife in capitalist countries seeks employment she is by no means escaping the drudgery of household work to become a creative contributing member of society. Instead she works two jobs, eight hours or more on the job outside the home and again when she gets home. This is certainly not the life that will free women.

The degree of oppression suffered by an individual woman, therefore flows directly from her relations to production, and when she doesn't work she has an indirect relationship as maintainer of the family. The extent of her oppression therefore is directly related to

the question of which class and which section of the class she belongs to and not primarily to whether or not she is a housewife. Therefore, her role is the family as a service and maintenance worker is a secondary feature of her basic relationship to a class. It is this emphasis on the oppression of women as rooted in the exploitation of workers as a class, rather than the emphasis on oppression as rooted in the roles fostered by the continuance of the division of labor in the family that separates Communist analysis from other analyses.

This is not to say that the age-old division of labor in the family is not the primary means of maintaining male supremacy and thus preventing women from being fully and equally integrated into social production. But once class oppression is ended, male supremacy then becomes an obstacle to a socialist society where no one exploits or profits from others and where maximum participation of every individual in social life is necessary for the advancement of all.

One new feature of modern capitalism is that the *material* basis for ending male supremacy is present today. We have a level of technology and scientific innovation which makes full and equal employment and a secure economic life possible for all sections of society, for men and women alike. But control of this vast scientific and technological knowledge in the U.S. remains in the hands of corporate monopoly and is used to intensify exploitation. At the same time the contradiction between what *is* under capitalism and what *could be* (as evidenced by the development of the socialist countries), is becoming more and more apparent to larger sections of society and especially to workers. Therefore, the intensity of the struggle against monopoly control also increases and with it the struggle against ideologies like male supremacy, which disunite workers.

Women are a critical part of the working class and without their conscious participation it will not be possible to unite workers. This is why it is so important to raise the level of the conscious fight against male supremacy and with it to raise the level of the class as a whole. To the capitalists, low-paid women workers mean lower wage standards and working conditions generally. They mean union busting, superprofits and a divided and helpless working class. Male workers can afford to ignore this danger only at great peril to themselves and their families. Communists, and Communist men in particular, must convince them of this.

Strategy of Reaction

Monopoly capital both understands and utilizes for its own ends the fundamental relationship between the class struggle and the fight

for women's equality. This was quite evident in the recent election campaign of Nixon, whose demagogic use of racism and male supremacy were instrumental in confusing people and diverting the issues away from fundamental questions into avenues of reaction.

Nixon was able to appeal demagogically to the backward fears of whites and he made special appeals to white housewives. This is shown in the effective use of the busing issue, his attacks on welfare recipients, his appeal to women to return to the home and care for their children. He projected the idea that the problems of drugs, poor reading scores, etc., were due not to our social system but to women leaving the home to get jobs. At the same time, Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Care and Development Bill and sought to get Congress to pass "workfare" legislation, which forces welfare mothers with children over six to take any jobs the welfare department offers or lose their welfare checks. Such a bill would force these mothers to compete with other low-paid workers and of course create another source of friction in the working class.

True, these were not the only factors in Nixon's election, but they were extremely important means for confusing people on the domestic issues.

The next four years will mean an acceleration of the attacks upon the working class in the economic and social spheres, and will be marked especially by an increase in the use of ideological weapons.

The use of racism and male supremacy as weapons to immobilize and confuse is being stepped up. Hand in hand with increased exploitation, monopoly capital strives to intensify ideological division between men and women by convincing workers that men have no interest in women's equality and that such concerns are those of women alone. At the same time it is trying to convince women that male supremacy is a natural thing and to continue to split women from other women on the basis of race and class. Thus it hopes to win large sections of women to reactionary causes.

This policy means that working-class women, and Black women in particular, will be major targets of the Nixon offensive. It means that women industrial workers will experience more intense pressures on the job in the attempt of monopoly to restrict the ability of male and female workers to organize effectively together for better wages and job conditions.

Ideology of Male Superiority

Since the beginning of private property, the ideology of male supremacy has permeated every institution, every level of society. It

is not an accident of nature, but a deliberate tool introduced and fostered to protect private property.

It is an ideology which stunts the growth not only of women but also of men and of the family as a whole. Concepts of women as property, as sex objects, as weak and defenseless and often as emotionally delicate are all concepts that are part of capitalist ideology. Centuries of these ideas and variations on them have prevented men from seeing their own interest in the struggle for full equality of women.

It thus becomes easy for capitalism to discriminate against women—to keep them out of certain industries, out of the more skilled jobs and the professions, out of positions of leadership in trade unions and other organizations. It is an ideology that has been part of people's thinking for centuries and will not die easily. This backward notion seeps into the minds of all, even the most advanced of us. In the family under capitalism, it is a stumbling block to women's economic, political and social equality. It curtails the ability of women to participate in all struggles for a better life. Many women don't have time to do so, with the worries of children and household on their minds. And those women who do participate in social movements do so—especially if they have children—at great expense. Yet there are thousands of active women, many of whom work; these are the women who are advancing and developing class consciousness. Special attention has to be given, especially in the case of working-class women, making it easier for them to be involved in struggles.

The working-class struggle for existence and survival, for emancipation from exploitation, requires a new outlook of cooperative, equal partnership in work, in struggle and in all relationships between men and women. Relationships of mutual respect and dignity in place of bourgeois competitiveness and disunity are developing.

The women's movement for equality, and especially working-class women's movements, cannot be completely successful without new initiatives and sustained, conscious struggle by Communist men. A good starting point is to win the trade unions to organize the unorganized with special reference to women, to fight for elimination of the male-female wage differential and for child care. And it is most important to initiate a fight to make all jobs safe for both men and women.

Women and Working-Class Unity: Communist Aims

We see our main aim as organizing struggles to give every woman the right, if she so chooses, to enter fully into the productive forces

in any job she cares to pursue. That is what is required to achieve full equality for women. It can only be accomplished by fighting for these conditions that will enable women to make this choice.

The outcome of struggles depends on the degree of unity forged in the process of their development. The intensity and degree of success of the fight against racism has proven to be the determining factor in forging unity in all of the workers' and people's struggles that occur in our country.

Increased militancy in the Black community, on the part of Black workers, has stepped up the struggle against racism precisely because it aids Black-white unity. The fight against racism is the first priority, therefore, in uniting the working class and in securing the unity of women. Racism takes various divisive forms among workers in general, and especially in struggles related to Black women. Therefore, for our Party, the special issues affecting Black women most acutely are key to advancing the whole struggle for women's equality.

Our program concentrates on issues that women face on the job: the fight for equal pay and job opportunities, the right to be trained for new skills, the right to maternity leave with pay, the right to higher wages, shorter hours, safety and security.

We fight for universal child care and for safeguarding the health, education and welfare of children. In the public schools we fight for inclusion of the history of the U.S. working class and for studies of the Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano peoples. We fight for a true picture of the history of the American Indian and of the peoples of various national backgrounds who helped build our country. We struggle against racist attitudes and biased treatment of children.

Since there is large-scale unemployment and since millions of people live in poverty, the ability of people to survive becomes a critical question. We fight for jobs, but we also fight for a minimum income so that no family or person will be forced to live in poverty created by an exploitative economic system. We fight to compel a system that prevents substantial numbers of people from earning a living to take the responsibility to assure that they don't starve.

We see, too, the need to build, together with other forces, a women's organization which is led from the beginning by working-class women, an organization which reflects in its leadership the struggles of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and American Indian women in the United States.

As we struggle to implement this program we will also continue to advance the struggle for socialism which, in the long run, provides the real and lasting basis for full and equal rights for women.

Youth and the Working Class

As the accelerated attack of monopoly and imperialism places more hardships on the working class, other social strata suffer as well, often in special ways, reflecting their special position in the economic, social and political life of the country. Without a doubt the plight of the highly proletarianized oppressed minorities, particularly Black Americans, is worsened. But also young people as a whole, and especially young workers, face a most severe crisis. Their well-being and prosperity is intrinsically linked to that of the working class. Contemporary state monopoly capitalist rule has accentuated this interrelationship.

It is further the case that the unity of the working class with youth and students is essential to the vitality and forward thrust of the working class and the trade union movement. Without such unity the interests and efforts of the youth and students, as we have seen recently, will be frustrated, fall short of their aims, and eventually be set back. Recognizing this vital truth, it is our task to clarify our thinking and action in our approach to the youth movement—to counter all obstacles to this unity and to facilitate its development. Objective conditions today have again made such unity more possible than ever before.

One hundred years ago Karl Marx stated succinctly, "The younger generation is in step with me." In 1905 Lenin wrote, ". . . all we have to do is to recruit young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely and again more widely and again more boldly, *without fearing them*. . . . The youth—the students, and still more so the young workers—will decide the issue of the whole struggle." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 146.)

The founders of the science of Marxism-Leninism understood the importance of youth and consistently strove to win the younger generation to socialism—to the side of the working class.

The Youth Question as a Special Question

Indeed, Marx, Engels and Lenin all recognized the special oppression and insecurity brought down upon the adolescents and children by capitalism and therefore the need for a special fight to be made by the youth in alliance with the working class as a whole. Under pre-capitalist modes of production one might get mar-

ried, have children and commence independent economic activity at age 13 or 14, whereas under advanced capitalism this, as a rule, does not take place until the age of 18 or later. And even though social conditions often force early marriages, today the requirements for leading an economically independent life are far greater than in earlier times and are becoming greater yet as the productive forces advance. In fact, under earlier modes of production, the youth question did not assume its special importance, since the period of youth was relatively brief. Capitalism has enhanced the importance of the youth question.

Hence to describe youth as solely an age question is to obscure the full content of that period of life. Neither do youth represent a "special class" or a "new revolutionary class" as some on the Left assert. We understand classes scientifically, as economic categories, defined by their relationship to the means of production. Under capitalism the main classes are those who own the means of production and those who must sell their ability to labor in order to survive. Among the youth there exist all class strata, even though, as we will show, youth have a certain plight in common which transcends classes and even though one's class position is often in flux during one's youth. Youth itself is of course a temporary state whereas a class is a fixed category having interests and an outlook separate and apart from other classes.

Youth is a social stratum, not a class, a social stratum which is multiclass. Although youth have common interests and needs, its interests do not stand alone and apart from those of the main classes. The son or daughter of a General Motors executive may have some interest in common with an auto worker's son or daughter, but when push comes to shove, you know pretty much where that executive's son or daughter is going to stand. This is *usually* true even when such bourgeois youth put on the "cloak of revolution," usually the cloak of ultra-Leftism.

The body is composed of cells, some dying and some being formed. Actually at puberty one undergoes qualitative hormonal change, which makes for many new features in one's life. These physical changes are reflected socially and culturally in different ways depending on the social and economic conditions, on the level of development of the productive forces. But what remains constant is that one becomes conscious of new drives. One becomes aware of sexual drives. One begins to form one's outlook towards a mate, towards a creative future family relationship.

In Western society, one begins to discover romance, which has

more meaning than childhood crushes. This is also a peak time in one's physical energy. One is prone to find avenues to release one's energy. Thus athletic and active recreation has a special appeal to and is especially needed by youth.

Changes also occur in one's consciousness. For the first time one begins to really develop one's *social consciousness*. One begins to discover the social world around one, to develop one's political outlook, ethical outlook and value system. This is a decisive time for the development of a revolutionary consciousness, a working-class outlook—or a reactionary, racist and bourgeois outlook, imperialism's point of view.

One can say that society is composed of social cells, some being born, some dying. After a number of decades we get a completely new generation. Those who are being socially "born" and are just coming to social consciousness reflect current times in a sharper way than do older people.

The Social Consciousness of this Generation

This generation of youth has grown up at a time when not for ten per cent but for one hundred per cent of their lives they have seen and experienced social upsurge. They have had to live with Vietnam and other U.S. imperialist aggressions around the world. One hundred per cent of the time since social consciousness they have experienced the upsurge of the Black liberation movement, the Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian movements. Because of the student revolts the campuses are viewed as centers for political activism as well as for other things. This would not be true of a person, let us say, in his forties or fifties, who has seen periods of lull and developed his consciousness under different conditions (such as those that existed during the 50s). Indeed, anti-Communism, though a serious problem, does not have the impact on this generation as it had on earlier generations.

For one hundred per cent of this generation's period of social awakening, they have seen the shift in the world balance of forces go basically one way—in favor of national liberation and socialism. They have clearly seen imperialism as the aggressor and not the "savior." They have seen capitalism losing its grip on the world. If we are living in revolutionary times, then these times will be most clearly inscribed in the makeup, the outlook, the psychology of this *younger generation*.

There are of course, weaknesses that emerge in youth as well. Often youth lack the "revolutionary patience" that Lenin talked

about. They often don't see things in a process of change and are prone to accept simple "instant solutions." They often will reject history and wallow in the present moment. As Engels said, ". . . it is useful to remind young people of former movements, because they think that they are indebted for everything only to themselves."

Also, if these are insecure times, then the younger generation will reflect that insecurity most sharply. The fact that the Black Panther Party actually called for "*revolutionary suicide*" at one point, or the desperate anarchistic trends that emerged among petty-bourgeois white youth, or the fact that the music and art of this generation is often dismal, extremely cynical and morbid, show this. One rock group actually calls itself the "Greatful Dead." There is also the fact that many former activists have chosen various escapes from reality and struggle. Rennie Davis is now with a guru. Some are on a drug trip, blindly seeking new life styles, pursuing notions of extended family, and some have even gone back to Jesus. While all of these have *some* humanist content, they mainly aim at disorienting the humanist ethical outlook which is so much a part of the basic psychology of this generation. Assuredly, the ruling class is doing all it can to promote such trends, since they have taken activists away from the movement and pointed in the wrong direction for thousands of youth seeking a (potentially activist) direction.

We must also mention the right-wing, racist appeal to masses of white youth aimed at pulling them into the service of monopoly: the "Jewish Defense League," the "Young Americans for Freedom," and now the so-called "National Caucus of Labor Committees" who are trying to do what the JDL started out to do some months ago, and who are racist and vile, as pretentious and fallacious, self-serving and fanatically anti-Communist and anti-working class as the KKK or Nazi Party are. All of these groups are part of monopoly's "youth movement," are part of imperialism's "direction" for youth.

Due to the predominance of class collaborationist leadership in the trade union movement, this generation has not experienced a time when the U.S. organized working class has been visibly in the forefront of all social struggles. This has made it most difficult to win many youth to the view that the labor movement is decisive to all struggle and that the interests of the youth and students are inter-related with those of the working class.

The overwhelming majority of U.S. youth, though bombarded with a multitude of ideological diversions, are most prone to move in a political direction for peace, equality and economic justice and socialism. A growing number, rebounding from the experience of the

'60s, and newly radicalized, are finding their way to the science of Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party and the Young Workers' Liberation League. Remember that this is the generation of youth who revolted in the military, who are key to revitalizing the labor movement. This is the generation of young women who lead the fight for women's equality, against Nixon's cutbacks and against high food prices. This is the generation that made it possible to form the Young Workers' Liberation League. This is a leftward moving generation that suffers lulls, as do all social movements, that is often derailed, but which reflects the world around it—a world moving toward socialism.

We can therefore say that youth is a very complex and important period in life, characterized by a transition from dependency to independence. It is a time of rapid-paced development and changes. These changes make for a particular state of mind, body and economic status which makes youth more economically insecure, ideologically open-minded and activist oriented. Youth are therefore a special fighting force which must be won to the side of the working class. Following oppressed minorities, youth are the next most important ally of the working class.

To be a youth is to begin to establish one's economic security, to be seeking the moral and educational assets to guarantee a fulfilling and meaningful future. A decent education is a life and death issue for youth. But in bourgeois society youth faces a very insecure life. Under capitalism, youth is one of the most difficult periods in life. The root of this insecurity lies in the basic contradiction between the social nature of labor and private appropriation of the product of labor and private ownership of the means of production. The root of youth's insecurity lies in the exploitation of the working class. Just coming into productive social life, youth have a difficult time, especially working-class youth and especially Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Native American youth.

Youth in the Working Class

This generation of young men and women workers, students, rural youth, middle class and professional youth face a most severe attack on their standard of living, on their cultural, social and political life, on their basic ability to secure a future and survive. This is most true when it comes to working-class, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian youth. But it is true overall under capitalism. Youth have a life without a future.

As in the general population, the majority of the youth population

is working class. Young workers, particularly organized young shop workers, serve as a link between the youth and students as a whole and the working class. Their role is crucial to the forward motion of the youth movement and the developing rank-and-file movement in labor. Though many assume the characteristics and basic life style of adults, being married, with children, etc., they nevertheless still maintain many youthful traits which are valuable in bridging the gap between youth and students and the working class. They can talk to, relate to, speak in the style of and understand the younger generation.

The proportion of young workers in the work force is today at record levels. Workers under 25 today account for 25 per cent of the work force, as opposed to 18.7 per cent in 1960. This can be explained by the effects of the post-war baby boom. But we should not disregard the needs resulting from capitalist exploitation of the scientific-technological revolution. One result of this has been an increase in semi-skilled, highly speeded-up production line jobs, jobs that are monotonous and alienating. These jobs are given to youth. Youth are being hired in large numbers because they are cheaper, capable of more intense labor, and therefore more profitable for monopoly. They also lack long term trade union experience and monopoly hoped to play on the antiunion inexperience of young workers. Lordstown, of course, exploded this myth and showed how the radicalization of youth didn't stop on the campuses.

While there has been an increase in youth employment, this has not eased the unemployment picture. In fact, it has gotten worse. In this respect the increase in the youth population (due to the post-war baby boom) has more than offset the increased youth employment in the semi-skilled, highly automated sections of U.S. industry.

The influx of large numbers of university trained technicians and scientific research workers has further brought youth into the working class. This is because it has accompanied the accelerated proletarianization of the middle strata which is very much at the base of the student revolt of the '60s and today. It has brought the problems of intellectuals and students closer to those of the working class. This is of considerable importance since there are presently eight million persons enrolled in colleges. Many of these work simultaneously.

Young workers have grown as a percentage of the working class, but they lag behind in unionization. For example, persons under twenty-five are 13 per cent of 341,000 unionized construction laborers and 52 per cent of the 798,000 nonunionized workers in the same

industry. A Department of Labor study showed 13.6 per cent of 17,192,000 organized workers under 25, and 28.8 per cent of 67,083,000 unorganized workers under 25. Young workers are concentrated out of proportion in those industries that are nonunion, where the working hours are longest, the pay lowest, and the working conditions worst. Often these youth have no job security, are hired and laid off continually, and lack even such elementary fringe benefits as hospitalization insurance, paid sick days and holidays, etc. Twenty five per cent of all agricultural workers in the U.S. are children aged 6 to 16. Further, some 850,000 children 14 and 15 years old were in the labor force in 1970. The attack on working-class families has forced not only women to work, but in many cases the children as well.

The Needs of U.S. Youth

When U.S. youth are confronting a 20 per cent unemployment rate, which rises to close to 40 per cent among Black urban youth, when 300,000 vets are unemployed, then youth are facing mass social destruction. If you cannot find a job, your future is in great doubt. Masses of youth are hanging out on the corners; some wander aimlessly throughout the country. (Ten thousand teenagers run away from home every week in the U.S.) Or many youth stay eternally in school because there is no work or because there is only the trap of meaningless, monotonous labor. And those who do find jobs face the worst working conditions: speedup; industrial accidents which cost the lives of 55 U.S. workers per day, 50 per cent of them youth; 8,500 severe injuries every day on the job.

The 5.5 per cent Nixon freeze means a special hardship for the young worker, who is on the very bottom of the wage scale. The spectre of higher prices and taxes in light of frozen low wages is an ominous plight for millions of young workers. The Nixon Administration, through its monopoly flunky Peter Brennan, is pressing for a subminimum wage law for youth under the pretense that this is a measure to help provide jobs. This bill places young workers against their parents in the competition for jobs. Passage of such a bill would mean that youth would take home \$66 a week for the first 13 weeks of employment (and in practice this would mean that for many the first 13 weeks would also be the last 13 weeks). Such a law would be exploited to the hilt by the monopolies in their drive for superprofits.

For millions of young workers, many with young families, the permanent features of U.S. state monopoly capitalism of inflation and

simultaneous unemployment spell poverty, deprivation and malnutrition. With such pressure on the young family, it's no wonder that one out of every three marriages ends in divorce. Without a job and job security youth have no future.

With the acceleration of the scientific-technological revolution, an education, including a higher education, is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. Present conditions of life and work demand that one be able to do more than read, write and add. During the last decade the number of jobs demanding 16 or more years of education rose by 67 per cent, while the number of jobs requiring only a high school diploma rose by 40 per cent.

While the demand for education has increased, the actual availability of educational facilities and opportunities has not kept pace. There is a lack of vocational training. The racist system of "channeling" is designed to funnel particularly Black and specially oppressed youth into the army of unemployed. Thirty to 40 children to a classroom is the norm for public schools, especially in the ghettos and barrios. The consequence of these conditions is that every year 750,000 drop out of high school to face a life of low-paying jobs—or unemployment. If you're unemployed and have no prospects for a job, there is the military, a consignment to an early grave, fighting for U.S. imperialism in its profit-hungry drive. Youth constitutes 25 per cent of the work force but are 90 per cent of the military. This is why militarization of youth has become an important aim of monopoly. Such are the conditions which have created the hundreds of thousands of draft resisters and war-related prisoners. The demand for amnesty for all such people is one of the key struggles for youth.

For those who do find low-paying and difficult work, the monopolies offer dope if the speedup is too much and a pink slip if they dare to fight back. The conditions of life, economic, social and cultural, in the ghettos and barrios facing working-class youth necessitates a fight for life itself. Mass struggle against racist repression aimed at specially oppressed youth is part of that fight. These are the reasons that 50 per cent of the 600,000 registered drug addicts are under 25. As one League member put it, "It's easier to find a junkie than a job." "It's easier to get a fix than a fixed income."

Inadequate education, unemployment, racism, drugs and militarization all kill. The youth must fight for their lives in unity with the working class; youth must fight for the *right to earn, learn and live*. This is the central campaign of the YWLL. This campaign offers the basis of unity between the youth and students and the working class. It offers the basis to develop a united anti-monopoly youth front, a

front of the generation fighting for its basic rights against monopoly oppression and imperialism's aggression.

What is needed is emergency provision for some of the basic needs of U.S. youth including:

- Public works jobs at decent wages and with union protection.
- Revamping the educational system to provide free, meaningful education from day care to graduate school.
- A massive campaign to organize the unorganized, the vast numbers of young workers ignored by the trade union movement's bureaucratic leaders.
- An end to racism and racist practices, police harrassment and repression. Freedom for political prisoners.
- Extension of unemployment benefits to include the entire period of unemployment, including first job seekers.
- Enforcement of safety regulations on the job, an end to speedup and unsafe working conditions.
- *Peace*: an end to U.S. aggression and plunder abroad; an end to the draft, ROTC and all forms of militarization of U.S. youth.

What is needed above all is socialism, where the salvation and well-being of the young people will be an aim of society rather than monopoly profits, where all of these things and more will be guaranteed. And it can be realized within the lifetime of this generation. Socialism is the system where youth can enjoy a secure, prosperous, culturally rich, peaceful life.

The recent period has shown world-wide that youth and students, particularly young workers, do reflect the revolutionary times we live in. Events have dramatically demonstrated that youth have a key role to play in revitalizing the labor movement and broadening the social base and scope of the *antimonopoly coalition*.

Today's college students will in the main not be independent entrepreneurs, but will be wage earners in highly centralized, monopolized industry. It is therefore objectively possible to develop the unity of workers and youth and students. The conditions are more favorable than those of even a decade ago. In the present period, the campus struggles, the struggles in the high schools and communities will have as a basic brace the rising mass upsurge of the millions of U.S. organized and unorganized workers. This upsurge will bring an antimonopoly coalition into being and will bring socialism closer to realization.

The Changing Status of Intellectuals and Professionals

Intellectuals in Industry

The scientific-technological revolution during this century has brought about a sharp rise in the numbers of engineers, technicians, scientists and other professionals.

The number of male professional, technical and kindred workers in manufacturing grew from 628,400 in 1950 to 1,200,400 in 1960 and 1,761,700 in 1970. Professional, technical and kindred workers include accountants, computer specialists, engineers, architects, lawyers and judges, librarians, mathematics specialists, life and physical (natural) scientists, operations and systems researchers and analysts, doctors, nurses and dieticians, religious workers, health technologists, social scientists (economists, psychologists, sociologists), social and recreation workers, researchers, engineering and science technicians, writers, artists and entertainers. (*U.S. Census, Occupations According to Industry, 1950, 60, 70.*)

Salaried professional workers have increased by 61 per cent during the 1950s and 71 per cent during the 1960s. In the Communist Party's concentration industries of electrical, auto, steel and transport the trend is similar. Along with this trend, as Marx, Engels and Lenin predicted, the number of independent, self-employed professionals has decreased. Independent professionals made up 36.9 per cent of all professionals in 1950, 15.3 per cent in 1960 and only 7.4 per cent in 1970. According to the 1970 Census, there are less than a million independent professionals today, compared with nearly three million twenty years ago.

Among the intellectual workers in manufacturing, the largest concentrations are of engineers and engineering and science technicians. In 1960 there were 352,000 engineers and 117,600 technicians in U.S. manufacturing; in 1970 there were 650,000 engineers and 412,000 technicians. In the nine years ending in 1961 the number of engineers, technicians and specialists in U.S. industry rose 75.2 per cent and from 1961-1970 it rose over 100 per cent. Most engineers and scientists in industry do research and designing in new fields opened up by the scientific-technological revolution.

There has been a significant increase in research-and-production

complexes and new fields have been opened up by the scientific and technical revolution such as the atomic industries and other industries, such as chemical, have been expanded and now employ massive numbers of engineers and scientists.

Along with this the number of salaried professional workers in manufacturing rose from 5.6 per cent of the work force in 1950 to 9.1 per cent in 1960 and 12.8 per cent in 1970. In contrast, the manual workers in manufacturing declined from 75 per cent in 1950 to 65 per cent in 1970. They have, however, increased in absolute numbers and still greatly outnumber intellectuals.

Under conditions of monopoly capitalism, this growth among engineers, technicians, scientists and other professionals is accompanied by growing numbers of them being forced into the working class.

Lenin noted that under capitalism the intelligentsia, "occupy a special position among the other classes, attaching themselves partly to the bourgeoisie by their connections, their outlooks, etc., and partly to the wage workers as capitalism increasingly deprives the intellectual of his independent position, converts him into a hired worker and threatens to lower his living standard." (*Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 202.*)

As is pointed out in *The Science of Communism and Its Falsifiers*:

As science becomes a direct productive force . . . the great demands for general and special knowledge in a number of sectors of production bring some proportion of technicians and even engineers to working directly at the bench. Such technicians and engineers do become part of the working class, representing the highly qualified stratum of this class. (*Novosti, Moscow, 1972, p. 39.*)

Wage differences between some groups of professional workers and manual workers are decreasing, although the average wage for professional workers is still substantially higher than for workers as a whole. At the turn of the century they received wages more than 100 per cent higher than other workers. In 1969 the average wage for male workers as a whole was \$8,563, while the average wage for professional and technical workers was \$12,262. Technical engineers received \$13,541. But engineering and science technicians, who make up the largest group next to engineers, averaged \$8,692.

Also importantly, most engineers and other professional workers no longer have privileged administrative and supervisory functions over workers.

On the other hand, however, there still remain substantial distinctions between industrial workers and salaried intellectuals in industry. Intellectuals have different cultural experiences, more education, generally higher and better living standards, and different everyday life styles and outlooks. Many believe that they still have an "out." While technicians and professionals in some fields earn nearly the same as the average manual workers, engineers and other categories of intellectuals earn substantially more. As a result of their backgrounds and conditions intellectuals are heavily influenced by bourgeois ideology and are subject to petit bourgeois illusions and waverings, which they carry with them to the working class. They remain a distinct stratum.

It is also important to keep in mind that there are still many intellectuals who are not part of the working class, those who are hired specifically to organize exploitation, such as production organization engineers, time-study technicians, inspectors, supervisors, industrial relations experts, etc. Psychologists and other social scientists are hired to find incentives for workers to produce more. Others are not even wage laborers.

Movements Among Intellectuals

Nevertheless, the frustration of the creative abilities of intellectual and professional workers drawn into production, their dull, routine, stultifying work, increased economic insecurity and unemployment and the reduced social status of intellectual and professional workers caused by the scientific-technological revolution under state monopoly capitalism has begun to draw these workers into working-class struggles.

The increase in intellectuals joining trade unions is one manifestation of this. During 1972 unions set a record in organizing white collar workers, winning collective bargaining rights for an unprecedented 21,780 employees. This is nearly double the 1971 figure and significantly above the 1967 record when unions organized 15,000 white collar employees. The largest single victory was among engineers in Seattle. (*White Collar Report*, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., based on figures of the National Labor Relations Board.)

The increase in unionization has been particularly pronounced among teachers and professors. Teachers have organized some of the most militant strikes in the recent period. In fact, the first real possibility of a general strike in many years in the U.S. was spearheaded in Philadelphia by the teachers, who were able to unite with community forces and the Central Labor Council. In

addition, the first state AFL-CIO council to oppose George Meany in his policy of neutrality in the 1972 elections and which continues to oppose his policies is headed by a teacher in Colorado.

It is also noteworthy, however, that more than half the professionals who voted in the 1972 union elections voted against the union. Professionalism and elitism still exist as major obstacles in union organizing. Large numbers of professionals still reject unions as organizations for blue collar manual workers, while still others refuse to unite in the same organizations with non-professional workers and insist on having their own organizations.

Intellectuals have also been an important force in other anti-monopoly struggles, particularly in the anti-Vietnam war movement, in support of the farmworkers and in defense of Angela Davis and other political prisoners and around other issues. In fact, intellectuals and students have often dominated movements such as the women's liberation movement, large sections of the youth and peace movements and others. The class backgrounds of the people in the leadership of these movements has been a major factor in their lack of consistent ideological direction and their failure to involve large numbers of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and white working-class people.

There has been recently, however, growing recognition by many intellectuals and professionals that the working class is essential for any significant progress.

A major shortcoming of the struggles of the professional and scientific workers has been their weakness in the fight against the severe racism and national chauvinism and discrimination against women in their fields. Of the total 11.5 million professional employed persons in 1970, 93 per cent were white, compared to about 5 per cent Black and 2 per cent of Spanish origin. The largest concentrations of Black and Spanish-origin workers are among engineering and science technicians and teaching on the lower levels—the lowest paying professional fields. In these fields earnings are nearly as low as the average for all workers. They also receive lower wages than white professionals within each category, with Black and Spanish women being paid the least. White professional men earned an average of \$13,900 in 1969 according to the 1970 Census. White professional women earned \$7,300; Black men, \$9,800; Spanist men, \$11,593; Black women, \$6,800; and Spanish women, \$6,800.

On the other hand, Black and Spanish-origin workers make up 13 per cent of clerical workers, craftsmen, laborers and operatives,

including 23 per cent of all laborers and 18 per cent of all operatives, the lowest paying and most unskilled categories.

False Theories

In recent years various bourgeois sociologists and economists, joined by New Leftists and revisionists, have circulated a number of theories on the status of intellectuals in today's scientific-technological society and their relationship to the working class and to social change. Among the more well known of these theorists are Roger Garaudy, recently expelled from the French Communist Party for continuing the dissemination of his revisionist political and ideological differences with the Party in violation of Communist rules of discipline; New Leftist Alain Touraine; Daniel Bell, the prominent U.S. sociologist; the late Ernst Fischer from Austria; Zbigniew Brzezinski, the out-and-out spokesman for imperialism; and Herbert Marcuse, the well-known pseudo-Marxist.

The most important themes running through these theories are: 1) that there has been and/or can be a total "merging" between the intelligentsia and the working class under capitalism, 2) that the intelligentsia, as part of the working class, has replaced the industrial workers as the leading revolutionary force, 3) that science and service have replaced industry as the key to the economy and social development because of the scientific and technological revolution. Underlying all of these theories is a failure to place the scientific-technological revolution in the U.S. in the framework of capitalist production relations, which are characterized by private ownership of the means of production and the ruthless drive for profits through exploitation of the masses of people.

Garaudy refers to Marx's writings on the "collective laborer" to justify his assumption of the merging between the intelligentsia and the working class. Marx's definition of "collective laborer" is the entire productive personnel of an enterprise which, through division of labor, jointly produces the commodity or material product. But Marx says that while capitalism brings together socially separated and contrasting types of labor in the "collective laborer" in the joint production of surplus value, mental and manual labor become increasingly separate within this. He refers to engineers, carpenters, mechanics, etc. as "a superior class of workmen, some of them scientifically educated, others brought up to a trade; it is distinct from the factory operative class and merely aggregated to it." (*Capital*, Vol. I, International Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 420.) Although the intelligentsia involved in production were part of the

"collective laborer," the content of their work (mental), their actual role in the social pattern and social division of labor (often supervisory and managerial) and their different cultural and educational levels led Marx to distinguish them from the main body of the working class. Marx refers to the *separation* of mental and manual labor, not to their "merger."

According to Marxism, a "merger" of the intelligentsia with the working class is not possible under capitalism. When Marx, Engels or Lenin spoke of the elimination of distinctions between mental and manual workers they were not talking about capitalism. This process develops under socialism but does not reach completion until communism, when all class and social differences are eliminated. Under capitalism, although increasing numbers of the intelligentsia are becoming members of the working class, there still remain intellectuals who are not part of the working class and who retain special functions in management of production and other spheres of social life. Moreover, the important differences mentioned above remain between the intellectuals in the working class and manual workers; they form a distinct stratum within the working class.

The capitalist system of private ownership, placing people in unequal relationships to the means of production according to their various types of labor or economic activity, fosters these differences because they mean more profits.

The scientific-technological revolution has increased mental labor of various kinds, both that relating to machines and automated equipment and mental labor in cultural production, in the service sphere, that connected with the scientific, designing, organizational, economic and other aspects of production maintenance or management or to other aspects of social or public life. As long as there is a need for a special stratum to carry out this kind of work and as long as most people are deprived by the ruling class of the training or education to do it, the intelligentsia will keep its specific social features and remain separate from the rest of society. Moreover, when these distinctions finally are removed, the result will not be the incorporation of the intelligentsia into the working class or *vice versa* or a "merger." Under communism, there will be an organic fusion of mental and manual labor in the productive activities of people; there will emerge the new communist man and woman whose full potential is developed.

Hyman Lumer, in his article "On Post-Industrial Society" (*Political Affairs*, January 1973) stated, "Capitalism is not merely a society defined by a given level of sophistication of the means of pro-

duction; it is a social system defined by who owns the means of production, how they are employed, and how the product is distributed." A new society, he points out, can emerge only on the basis of a fundamental alteration of these relations.

It is obvious that in the U.S. today the monopoly capitalists, the financial oligarchy, remain the owners and controllers of the means of production, despite the growth of science and service work. Industrial workers are among the most exploited in the nation and still create the greatest amount of wealth. U.S. workers, contrary to Marcuse's pronouncement that workers have been co-opted into the establishment and assertions of others that the class struggle has declined, are the victims of increasing exploitation, deteriorating housing, soaring prices and rents, speedup, decline in real wages, inadequate medical care, unemployment and job insecurity, etc. These conditions have led to growing mass movements and an intensification, not a decline, of the class struggle.

The working class, particularly industrial workers, plays the leading revolutionary role because of its objective relationship to the means of production. The working class is exploited, which places its interests insolubly in contradiction to those of the monopolists who own the means of production and appropriate the wealth created by the workers. The working class, because of its interest in consistently fighting against the monopolies and for socialism, reflects the interests of all those oppressed by the monopolies, including intellectual and scientific workers. This, with its organization and discipline and with the leadership of its revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, makes the working class the vanguard of all revolutionary forces; it is not, as Garaudy asserts, merely one of many "elements" in the new revolutionary "historic bloc." The different levels of consciousness among these forces and in different sectors of the working class does not change this.

An Anti-Monopoly Alliance

An important implication of the changing status of intellectuals in relationship to the working class is the possibility for a powerful alliance between the working class and intellectuals and professionals in the anti-monopoly struggle and for socialism.

It is the growing, ruthless control of the monopolies over scientists, technicians and other professionals which creates the basis for this alliance. It is not solely the scientific and technological revolution.

The international meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties

in Moscow in 1969 noted, "The convergence of interests of the working class, farmers, urban middle strata and intellectuals as well as their growing cooperation reduce the social foundations of monopoly power, sharpen its internal contradictions and promote the mobilization of broad masses of people for the struggle against monopolies and imperialism." (*International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969.)

The parties also agreed:

In this age, when science is becoming a direct productive force, growing numbers of intellectuals are swelling the ranks of wage and salary workers. Their social interests intertwine with those of the working class; their creative aspirations clash with the interests of the monopoly employers who place profit above all else. Despite the great diversity in their positions, different groups of intellectuals are coming more and more into conflict with the monopolies and the imperialist policy of government. The crisis of bourgeois ideology and the attraction of socialism help to bring intellectuals into the anti-imperialist struggle. The alliance of workers by hand and by brain is becoming an increasingly important force in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, for the democratic control of production, of cultural institutions and information media and for development of public education in the interest of the people. (*Ibid*, p. 25.)

The establishment of this alliance can become a major factor for the development of the class struggle.

If this alliance is to be consolidated as the powerful force it can be, the fight against racism must become a central part of the struggle among the intelligentsia. White professional and scientific workers must fight consistently for an end to discrimination and racism in all professional fields of work. The demand must be raised for special hiring programs and educational and training programs so that the proportion of Black and Spanish-origin professional workers increases in all fields, particularly in the higher paying categories. The demand must also be raised for equal pay for equal work. Because of the severe oppression of Black and Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. and the consequent Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican liberation movements, an influx of Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican workers into the intelligentsia would add greatly to the militancy and consistency of the struggles of professional and scientific workers.

Similarly, professional and scientific workers must also struggle for

an end to male supremacist policies of discrimination against women in the professions in hiring and in pay.

In building the alliance between the working class and the intelligentsia, it must be kept in mind that there are still many intellectual workers who have interests that still conflict with the workers and coincide with the employers because of their production and social functions.

The working class must be aware of the vacillations and petty-bourgeois ideologies which characterize sections of the intelligentsia, including those who have been forced into the working class, because of their education and class backgrounds. There must be constant ideological battle against individualism, elitism, reformism and tendencies towards ultra-leftism and anarchism.

The revolutionary Marxist-Leninist intelligentsia who have adopted a working-class ideology have a special role to play in combatting petty-bourgeois ideological trends, particularly where the working-class movement has, for various reasons, a relatively low level of class consciousness. It is an important task of Marxist-Leninist intellectuals to bring to the workers Marxist-Leninist ideology—a deeper understanding of events around them and a consciousness of the need for revolutionary transformation to socialism.

(Continued from page 107)

4. Building of rank-and-file trade union organizations to fight for greater militancy in the labor movement, for ending of racism and discrimination and for democratization of all unions.

5. Formation of a Puerto Rican workers' association in New York City to work for the general program presented here.

6. Solidarity of all U.S. working people with the movement for the independence of Puerto Rico; establishment of an organized movement in support of Puerto Rican independence; action for cessation and dismantling of all U.S. military spying operations and bases in Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, Panama and other parts of Latin America; full solidarity with the Chilean people in their struggle against the military-fascist dictatorship.

7. Freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails.

8. The legal establishment of bilingual status for New York City in government, schools, and all other areas of life.

Economic Conditions of Black Workers

The struggle for Black liberation has passed the civil rights stage and has entered the stage of struggle for economic equality—the struggle for jobs and adequate wages, the basic, root struggle.

For this is what racism is all about—the drive of capital to maintain and extend its privileges won from the slavocracy, the “right” to superprofits from the extra exploitation of Black workers. Segregation provided the environment in which the ruling class could most easily exercise this “right.” Once the separating screen is removed, the ideological climate in which super-exploitation flourishes is modified to the disadvantage of capital. Super-exploitation becomes less automatic, but not impossible.

The struggle to end it remains the most onerous of all post-slavery liberation struggles, one that can only be won by the combined action of Black and white masses.

Can Economic Equality be Won?

Here, as in other struggles, it is necessary to combat the pessimism of those who say that nothing can change for the better so long as capitalism remains. At worst, it would be necessary to struggle, as Marx stressed, so as not to sink down further, so as to gather the forces needed for a successful socialist revolution.

But gains can be won. Owing to the struggles of the working class and the oppressed peoples, owing to the exemplary value of achievements in socialist countries, many particular things have changed for the better in capitalist countries. Many concessions have been won, even as other features have worsened, even as contradictions have deepened.

I have to thank Comrade James Jackson for the formulation that capitalism does not need superprofits of racism in order to exist. Certainly, it seeks such superprofits wherever it can get them. But after all, the main bulk of surplus value derived by U.S. capitalists is from the labor of the whole U.S. working class. Deprived of superprofits, capitalism would be weakened economically and even more politically. The achievement of substantial economic equality would facilitate the political unification of the working class, the development within it of a class consciousness and an

awareness of the need to fight for socialism.

Not all capitalist countries have substantial numbers of oppressed nationalities. In Japan, for example, apart from a small number of Koreans, the working class is nationally and racially almost completely homogeneous. Yet this has not prevented Japanese capitalism from growing faster than that of any other capitalist state.

Within the United States, the Asian peoples, previously among the most subject to racist superexploitation, have won major advances in relative position. In Hawaii, where they are a majority of the population, they have achieved virtual economic equality, and their per capita income exceeds the national average of the entire population.

Is it *likely* that economic equality can be completely won under capitalism? No. And in addition to other reasons, as this struggle reaches a high stage, it will merge with the general anti-monopoly struggle, with struggles undermining capitalism itself. But we cannot set a boundary in advance, limiting the amount that can be won, nor do we accept as a condition of struggle that capitalism must be maintained.

We enter this struggle confident that major gains can and must be won.

Class Structure

The Black people are overwhelmingly of the working class, more so than any other national or racial group in the population. Ninety-six per cent of all Black employed people are wage and salary workers, as compared with 89 per cent of white* workers. (U.S.-C, table 92.** Employees of own corporations are excluded from wage and salary workers.)

The Black petty bourgeoisie, including the veritable handful that might be regarded as bourgeoisie proper, total only 238,000 or 3.2 per cent of those employed. These include 170,000 managers and administrators, including self-employed, 43,000 farmers and 25,000 upper strata professionals—engineers, physicians and dentists.

There are 586,000 teachers, nurses, clergymen and other professional and intellectual workers. Under present conditions, for the most part they belong to the working class, but do constitute an upper stratum of the working class.

* Unless otherwise indicated, white refers to those of other than Spanish heritage.

** These designations refer to volumes of the 1970 *Census of Population, e.g. United States Summary, Part C, General Social and Economic Characteristics.*

The remainder of the working class, 6,537,000, constitute 88.8 per cent of the employed Black population. The largest subgroup of these, nearly 3 million, are in the lowest level occupational categories: laborers and service workers. Some 1.8 million are in the categories of sales, clerical and craft workers.

Among the white population, 13.5 per cent are in the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, 13.0 per cent are intellectual workers and 73.5 per cent are the remainder of the working class. Of this last group, however, the majority are in the subgroup of sales, clerical and craft workers. (U.S.-C, table 91.)

About 2.8 million Black workers, or about 43 per cent of all Black non-intellectual workers, are of the industrial proletariat (mining, construction, transportation, manufacturing, communication and utilities). (U.S.-C, table 122.) Adjusting for undercounting, and for trends since 1970, they now comprise close to 15 per cent of the blue collar industrial workers. Thus, Black workers are now a major sector of the working class and especially of the industrial proletariat. The extra exploitation of the rapidly growing Black section of the industrial proletariat provides increasing superprofits for monopoly capital. But this section, because of the extra exploitation and oppression, can be expected to be and often proves to be among the most militant elements of the proletariat, tending to lead in struggles, in initiatives essential for the entire working class.

What have been the trends over the past 33 years?

During World War II there were significant gains in the *relative* economic status of Black people, the most rapid ever in a short period. Part of these gains were lost in the five immediate postwar years. Thereafter, for 14 years, there was stagnation in the relative economic status of Black people. Significant gains were registered in the middle and late '60s, corresponding to the acceleration of Black people's struggles. By 1969 the previous peak relative position reached in 1945 was approximately regained.

Of course, over this period of several decades there have been significant gains in the absolute living standards of Black people, as of white people. But the criterion of discrimination and oppression is given by the relative standard, the comparison of levels reached with those attained by white people, and even more, with those which could be obtained, given the highly productive labor of the working class, Black and white.

How to measure the gain during the last decade? While census figures on per capita income by race were not available from

the 1960 census, we can approximate same by analysis of other data. This indicates that in 1959 the per capita income of Blacks was equal to 47 per cent of that of white people. Thus between 1959 and 1969 there was a substantial 7-point gain—from 47 per cent to 54 per cent.

But a more complex picture is revealed when we examine the regional figures. These are provided by the annual census studies of consumer income. Unfortunately, these statistics compare only family income, and not per capita income. Between 1959 and 1971 the median family income of Blacks increased from 51 per cent of that of whites to 60 per cent of that of white families.

But in two major regions there was a decline—in the Northeast from 69 per cent to 67 per cent, and in the North Central states from 74 per cent to 69 per cent. The gains were in the West, from 67 per cent to 71 per cent, and especially in the South, from 46 per cent to 56 per cent. (*Current Population Reports*, Series P23, No. 42, 1972, table 19, p. 32.)

The concentration of gains in the South resulted from the fact that the liberation struggles of Black people were most advanced there, involved broader masses, and were more clearly oriented to basic issues. Also involved was a general reduction of regional differences, associated with the more rapid industrialization of the South, and migration trends.

Why the big gain in the national average, despite the decline in the relative position of Black families in the North? Because so many Black people migrated from the South to the North and West, where differentials were less severe in the first place.

While the gains in the South are noteworthy, the remaining discrimination is still the most severe in the country. And a sobering fact is the *increased* differential against Blacks in the North.

The losses since 1959 were concentrated in the Nixon years. Between 1968, the year before Nixon, and 1971, the last year for which we have statistics, Black families lost in income relative to whites by 3 percentage points in the Northeast, 5 percentage points in the North Central states, and 8 percentage points in the West.

True, economic factors—the recession which hit Blacks much harder than whites—played a part in that. But that is far from sufficient to account for the extent of the losses. The Nixon Administration's onslaught against the Black people, carried out at the behest of and for the benefit of monopoly capital, certainly played an important part.

Even before that, the evidence is clear of the stagnation of the

relative position of Black people in the urban ghettos. In 1945 the median income of Black families and single individuals combined, living in urban areas, was 59.9 per cent of that of white families and single individuals. In 1969 the corresponding ratio was 59.4 per cent.

A final note on the measure of economic discrimination relates to the prevalence of poverty. The official figures on poverty include only the most wretched of the poor. Serious deprivation extends much higher up the income ladder. But according to the official figures, in 1969 some 9.9 per cent of the white population lived in poverty, as compared with 35.0 per cent of the Black population. A somewhat more realistic but still inadequate picture is given by the numbers living below 125 per cent of the official poverty level. These constitute 14.0 per cent of the white population, and 42.9 per cent of the Black population. (U.S.-C, table 95.)

Discrimination in Jobs

The main components of economic discrimination are discrimination in the kinds of jobs available, discrimination in pay for like work, and discrimination in access to any kind of job—that is, in unemployment.

During the decade of the 1960s, Black men made more than proportional gains in professional jobs and in production line and skilled industrial jobs. At the same time, other Black men rapidly lost out in laborers' jobs and Black farmers were decimated. The number of nonwhite farmers declined by more than 70 per cent in a single decade. (U.S., 1960, D 205. U.S.-C 91.) *Taking into account the gains and losses over the decade, combined with population growth, the access to jobs and hence the unemployment picture of Black male workers worsened over the decade*, though there was some improvement in the *types* of jobs available to Blacks.

Among Black women, the story was somewhat better. There were very pronounced gains in the professional and clerical fields. At the same time, the number of Black private household workers was cut 40 per cent. In large part this represented a voluntary moving up to better opportunities. But also significant was the opting of wealthy families to substitute European and other household workers, in the face of the increasing militancy of Black women.

By 1970 nearly 1.2 million Black women, or more than one-third of all employed Black women, had white-collar jobs, considerably exceeding the number of Black men in white-collar jobs. At the same time there was a rapid, but not nearly as rapid, in-

crease in the number of white women with white-collar jobs. By 1970 almost two-thirds of employed white women had white-collar jobs. In practical terms, at salaries employers aimed to pay, this already largely exhausted the pool of potentially available white women white-collar workers. This, as we shall see, more than any devotion to fair employment practices was decisive in the multiplication of white-collar employment among Black women. At the same time, there was a rapid increase in the number of Black women factory workers. The number of nonwhite female operatives increased from 337,000 to 597,000, and penetrated in significant numbers even into such previously lily-white industries as textiles.

As in the past, the percentage of Black women in the labor market considerably exceeds that of white women. In many areas Black women actually hold *more* jobs than Black men. This is true, for example, in the vast suburban areas of New York City—Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk Counties. It is also true that more of the women have relatively good jobs, or relatively regular jobs, that more of the men are unemployed and cannot find *any* jobs.

Discrimination in Wages and Conditions

Black people on the same or comparable jobs on the average get lower wages than whites. Such discrimination doesn't exist on paper any more, but persists markedly in real life. For example, in the Detroit metropolitan area the incomes of Black males as a percentage of whites in 1969 were: salaried managers and administrators, 60; plumbers, 63; painters, 67; linesmen and servicemen, 72; manufacturing foremen, 77; truck drivers and deliverymen, 84; motor vehicle operatives, 87; assemblers, 92; mail handlers and clerks, 100; freight, stock and material handlers, 130. (Mich.-D, table 175.)

Note the mysterious 30 per cent extra average earnings of Black freight, stock and material handlers as compared with white workers. This seeming advantage is illusory and conceals a real discrimination against Black workers. White full-time workers on this job average more than Black full-time workers. But a very large part of the whites on the job are casual, part-time workers, and 40 per cent are teenagers—often working part time after school or during summer vacations. Their low annual earnings pull down the average for white workers. Black youth, on the other hand, do not have the connections to get these part-time and vacation jobs, which contributes to the sky-high unemployment rate among Black youth.

The combined effect of discrimination in types of jobs, and in pay for the same job, is shown in the comparison of earnings within

particular industries. In 1969, among male workers in the Detroit metropolitan area, Blacks earned 61 per cent as much in communications, 66 per cent as much in construction, 70 per cent as much in non-electrical machinery, 72 per cent as much in motor vehicles, and 98 per cent as much in postal service as whites. (Mich.-D-175.) In every case the industrial ratio was lower than the ratio for particular characteristic occupations within the industry.

Earnings differentials between white and Black women are less marked than between white and Black men. But then, discrimination against white women as women is sufficiently severe to place limits, in practical terms, on the possible extent of additional discrimination against Black women.

Unemployment

Discrimination in access to employment—any kind of employment—is one of the most severe hardships afflicting Black people. The old rule of last hired, first fired continues in effect, by and large. Where it has been overcome within a particular factory, it continues to operate on a corporation-wide basis. Plants are moved from northern urban centers where Black factory workers are concentrated to rural areas, selected southern areas, and overseas. This generally leads to a relatively greater loss of jobs for Black workers, and, within the United States, to their replacement by predominantly white work crews.

Official statistics continue to show Black unemployment at about double the rate of white unemployment. But in fact the situation has worsened. More and more Black workers are simply counted out of the labor force—though actually employed.

In 1940 the percentage of Black males in the labor force was slightly higher than that of white males, 80 per cent as against 79 per cent. By 1970 there was a moderate decline in white male labor force participation, by 5 points to 74 per cent. This could be explained by lengthened periods of education and an increased proportion of retirees. But during the same 30-year period the percentage of Black males in the labor force declined 15 points—to 65 per cent. The factors making for a decline were not more operative for Blacks than for whites. The figures showing the gap in participation rates in 1970 are not realistic. Undoubtedly a large part, if not all, of the extra percentage of Black males shown as not in the labor force are really unemployed. The evidence is more striking in that the reported decline of Black participation is shown for *each* age group, including the prime working ages.

According to the official figures, unemployment among both whites and Blacks was huge in 1940—15 per cent among white males and 18 per cent among Black males. Unemployment affected both Blacks and whites with sufficient intensity to provide the political basis for a united struggle for jobs, unemployment relief, etc. By 1970 the reported percentages were 3.7 per cent for white and 6.5 per cent for Black males. While unemployment was much milder than in 1940, the relative gap between white and Black unemployment was wider. But how much of the improvement, especially in the case of Blacks, resulted from simply counting unemployed workers out of the labor force?

I have made certain minimum adjustments, to put back into the category of unemployed workers those who are counted out of the labor force but are in fact in the labor force. This gives, among males in 1970, an unemployment percentage of 6.7 per cent for whites and 13.5 per cent for Blacks. Thereby the unemployment percentage for Black males is brought up to within striking distance of where it stood in 1940 when the mass unemployment of the great crisis had not yet been liquidated. And these adjusted figures are still minimal.

Additional light on the extent of Black unemployment is shed by a Labor Department study of New York City poverty areas—Bedford Stuyvesant, Central Harlem, East Harlem and South Bronx. Some 218,000 persons were counted in the labor force, of whom 14,800 or 6.8 per cent were counted as unemployed, with nearly equal percentages for men and women. But in addition there were 124,700 “contingent labor force entrants.” The study shows that the great majority of these people want jobs and could work, *if* society cooperated. In some cases, this would simply require access to decent child care centers; in other cases, really equal employment opportunities; in still others, permission to take ten-minute rest periods for a heart condition. Including all of the contingent labor force raises unemployment in these areas to 124,700, or 37.9 per cent of an expanded labor force of 328,600.

Such facts show the validity of frequent statements that unemployment remains at deep depression levels among the Black population. True, during the great depression unemployment among Blacks was understated in a different way—by exclusion of the massive hidden unemployment among millions of Blacks surviving in the southern countryside under conditions of dire poverty and oppression. The transition from rural misery and repression to urban ghetto misery and repression may be a step upward in the social ladder, if only in that there is more access to food and medical care. But the

main gain, perhaps, is the ending of rural isolation, the entry of so many millions into the working class, the creating of more favorable conditions for struggle, and for the achievement—still difficult—of Black-white unity within the working class.

Discrimination as a Ruling-Class Weapon

A vitally important ideological question is to pin down the responsibility for economic discrimination against Blacks. It is organized and perpetuated, consciously and craftily, by monopoly capital, by the very highest echelons of the financial oligarchy that runs this country. This reality provides the fundamental linkage of the struggle for Black liberation with the basic class struggle between capital and labor and with the contradiction between all working people and the monopolies.

The fact of a much lower economic status for the Black population cannot be denied. But spokesmen for the capitalists, conscious or unconscious of their role, emphasize every other cause but the real one. There are variations among the outright racist theoreticians, the liberals, and the petty bourgeois radicals—but they all end up absolving those mainly responsible, the dominant centers of monopoly capital. And many of them end up implicitly or explicitly blaming the Black people themselves.

One of the most powerful evidences of the decisive responsibility of monopoly capital for U.S. racism is provided by Mr. Watergate himself. Nixon, more than any other president in recent times, is the united choice of the top circles of U.S. finance capital. He carries out the synthesis of their policies. Is there any question that racism is the most conspicuous theme of his domestic policies? Just consider the persistence with which he fights to force withdrawal of every concession wrung out of racist employers by Black workers. Note his attempt to virtually outlaw minimum quota plans for employment of Black workers; the use of the government apparatus to fight in the courts for increased school segregation; the intensification of racist federal housing policies; the brazen mockery of fair employment contract requirements by Nixon's Pentagon in purchasing munitions; his attacks on the subsistence needs of Black mothers and children; his racist “law and order” policies; the mobilization of police gangsterism against the ghettos by the leading practitioner of international military gangsterism and domestic political gangsterism.

But perhaps some would claim that Nixon is a special case.

Very well, let's turn to that epitome of corporate monopoly, the largest private employer in the country, the American Telephone and

Telegraph Company. It is controlled by a coalition of the most powerful Wall Street and allied financial groups, the Rockefellers, the Morgans, the First National City Bank, together with Boston and Chicago financial interests. An outstanding student of the U.S. financial structure, Stanislav Menshikov, observes, "AT&T has truly become the collective possession of a number of the main U.S. financial groups. The company needs annually about \$1,000 million in loans, an operation impossible without the coordinate action of the main New York banks and insurance companies." (*Millionaires and Managers*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 252.)

The report of the Equal Employment Commission published last year (*"A Unique Competence: A Study of Equal Employment Opportunity in the Bell System"*) is a devastating indictment of the deliberate, profit-motivated racism of those coordinating representatives of the main U.S. financial groups.

"From the earliest time," the report says, "Black workers were almost completely excluded from employment in the telecommunications industry. In 1930, when Blacks constituted 9.7 per cent of the total population in the United States, they represented only 0.7 per cent of the workers in the telecommunications industry and were exclusively concentrated in the few service worker and laborer jobs."

Beginning with World War II, the report explains, Black employment by "Ma Bell" began to increase, but only slowly until the 1960s, when acute shortages of low-wage labor in the cities forced the company to employ Blacks, if it wanted to keep wages low. But it employed them only in the worst jobs and under the worst conditions.

The report states: "Somehow, Black employment was being concentrated in the lowest paying, least desirable, dead-end jobs in the Bell System. Blacks still had not obtained a significant number of high-paying craft jobs in any area. This fact emphasizes the futility of the employment advances made by Blacks in the Bell System since 1930."

They are kept out of the better jobs either by overt racist exclusion, as in the South, or by discriminatory tests and criteria "which tend to screen out Blacks and screen in whites." In particular, for the telephone craft jobs, all training is done on the job. No previous skills are relevant. Most of the hiring has been of Black women, particularly of Black women operators.

The report describes the horrible conditions of the operators' jobs and the refusal of white women to take them in the large cities because of low wages and abominable conditions. These factors, it says, are converting the traffic department, where the operators work,

"from simply a nunnery into a ghetto nunnery." And it explains the motivation, as exposed in a speech by AT&T vice president Walter Straley to the top brass of the Bell System. He says: "What a telephone company needs to know about its labor market [is] who is available for work paying as little as \$4,000 to 5,000 a year." According to Straley, two out of three persons available at that wage are Black. He adds:

It is therefore just a plain fact that in today's world, telephone company wages are more in line with Black expectations—and the tighter the labor market the more this is true. . . .

There are not enough white, middle-class, success-oriented men and women in the labor force . . . to supply our requirements for craft and occupational people. And from now on, the number of such people who are available will grow smaller even as our need becomes greater. It is therefore perfectly plain that we need non-white employees. Not because we are good citizens. Or because it is the law as well as a national goal to give them employment. We need them because we have so many jobs to fill and they will take them.

The blatant racism of this high company official needs no comment. Nor does the obvious linkage of racism, in his consciousness, to the drive for superprofits. Nor does his confidence that the government will do nothing to seriously interfere with his racist practices.

Are trade unions also guilty? Certainly. But they are not so guilty as employers, and their guilt derives from that of the employers and the government. They are not so guilty because some unions nationally, and some locally, do carry on struggles against discrimination, with varying degrees of intensity and consistency; because some unions do process the grievances of Black workers discriminated against by employers, insulted or injured by racist foremen, etc. True, the present class-collaborationist trade union leadership, typified by the Meany clique, is itself guilty of crass racial discrimination as well as of failure to combat the discrimination of the employers.

But the main difference is this: monopoly capital is racist at its very core. It can no more become internationalist in theory and practice than it can stop extracting profits from the labor of its workers. On the other hand, the self-interest of the entire working class lies in true internationalism, in the fight against racism. And trade unions were originally formed as fighting instruments of the working class, and continue, within certain limits, to fulfill that function. The struggle must be waged, *and it can be won*, to convert the U.S. trade unions into the decisive organized center in the struggle

to eliminate racist discrimination.

Stake of White Workers in the Fight Against Racism

One of the most difficult and yet essential tasks is to convince white workers that they are the losers from racist economic practices, and not the gainers from discrimination "in their favor."

As we have seen, the degree of economic discrimination against Black workers remains much more severe in the South than in the remainder of the country. Facts prove that this operates to drag down, and not to raise the earnings of southern white workers. Calculations show that these workers, this year, are losing \$20 billion because of this factor. That is the amount by which their earnings fall below those of northern white workers. It is the price of racism and should be added to the \$35 billion which employers extract directly from superexploitation of Black and other oppressed peoples. For much the same reason, southern employers have been successful in holding down union organization and maintaining the region's leading industry, textiles, as a low-wage, open shop sanctuary.

But there are still broader considerations. The *New York Times* (May 3, 1973) had an article by Edward J. Carlough, president of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, AFL-CIO, eloquently attacking the big-business-government inflationary drive against the living standards of the workers. He writes:

We so-called great and powerful American trade unionists have become a tray of cream puffs. We're being gouged by the price fixers and clobbered by the tax collectors, while all the time our unemployment rate continues at over 5 per cent nationally, and over 10 per cent for construction workers. We're so puffed up and polite with our middle-class status—we great "silent majority"—that the jackals are eating us alive.

It's time to remember where we came from. It's time to remember again what militant trade unionism is all about. It's time to start marching to the sound of a different drummer—that old drummer who screamed and scratched and got us where we are. . . .

But what *really* has happened to the militancy of construction workers? Where is the stain? It's exactly in the policy of Mr. Carlough, who runs what is notoriously one of the very most racist of all trade unions in the United States. Can he seriously expect that workers will militantly fight the monopolies when their attention is focused *by their leaders* on preserving a monopoly of jobs at the expense of that large and growing sector of the blue-collar working

class who are Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Indian, Asian? When men like himself exclude from leadership that sector of the working class which, by virtue of its subjection to superexploitation and its traditions, is today bound to be prominent in the leadership of a more militant, advanced period of struggle of the U.S. working class?

An exhaustive study and solution of this problem is yet to be accomplished. For the moment, let us bear in mind one central point: *Any real gains toward equality for Black workers will not be at the expense of white workers, but will necessarily bring in their wake gains for white workers.*

Program Toward Black Equality

Experience of the past ten years of fair employment legislation makes it clear that mere "cease and desist" types of laws, rules and regulations mean little or nothing in the fight against racist discrimination in jobs and employment. Certainly, prohibition of overt forms of exclusion and segregation is necessary and must be much better enforced than heretofore. But to make major, sustained gains it is necessary to move decisively beyond this. It is necessary to organize the struggle for positive, measurable action to bring about economic equality for Black workers. Recently there has been an increase in the number of court orders and government orders calling for the ending of this or that discriminatory practice by this or that company, and including some compensation for past discrimination. But these have been small, local achievements, which fail to break the overall pattern of discrimination in a decisive way.

There are certain principles that must be adhered to if real, sustained gains are to be made.

First, it is not enough to call for the end of discrimination. Decisive is insistence on positive actions that lead to equality. And these must be concretely specified actions, with readily measurable criteria for compliance.

Second, the approach must not only involve reliance on legislatures, government agencies and courts. It must depend ultimately on mass mobilization for enforcement, and the decisive question here is the winning of major sections of the organized working-class movement, white and Black, to participate actively in the struggle for equality.

Third, demands for Black equality must be posed in a context which offers a perspective of gains for all working people, for progress towards power and well-being for the white and Black working-class majority, toward ending the combination of the trusts and the military.

Concretely, there is much controversy over so-called quotas. Schemes for ending the lily-white character of construction craft unions have included provisions that specified numbers of Black workers must be hired. In these and other cases, it is specified that the number must be in proportion to the Black share in the population. It is these provisions which are resisted most strenuously by the ruling class and the racist politicians. President Nixon, in fact, in his customary authoritarian fashion, has ruled out all agreements which set specific levels of Black employment which must be reached. This action held up for a year an agreement at Republic Aviation on Long Island, until a compromise was reached which watered down the specification by use of the term "goal."

There are two arguments used by the racists. They say that a concrete requirement is a quota system, and liken it to the negative quota system which restricted Jews in Tsarist Russia and which in fact still operates to restrict or exclude Blacks, Jews, and others in universities, corporation administrative offices, etc. in the United States. But this is completely fraudulent. Call it a quota if you will. But it is the exact opposite of a restrictive quota. It is a quota to end exclusion. Experience has shown repeatedly that lack of a specific quota leaves the door open for the employer to say: "I did my best, but this was all that was possible." If instead he is told: "You must hire so and so many by such and such a time," there is no wriggling out.

The other argument is lack of qualified Black workers—or a variant thereof—they do not appear for work. Both of these are completely phony. The fact is that, outside of certain professional fields, most skills are learned on the job. For the most part, the employers' qualifications are drawn up with a view to excluding Blacks, and to excluding those among whites who are most likely to be militant.

Finally, there is the question of how to overcome the fear of white workers that more jobs and better jobs for Black workers are at their expense. First, because of ordinary labor turnover in U.S. manufacturing industry, Black workers can be brought into jobs at a rapid pace without the forced displacement of a single white worker. Second, the crucial political requirement is to combine the demand for Black economic equality with demands for other programs that will increase total employment at all levels by *more than* the added Black employment, and that will raise the economic conditions of workers at all levels, especially the lower levels. This is encompassed in such Communist Party programmatic demands as spending \$120

(Continued on page 20)

Superexploitation of Black Workers

The subject of this paper is the superexploitation of Black workers based on racism. We start with certain facts which we believe have not yet been focused on from a Marxist point of view and from which the necessary conclusions have yet to be drawn.

A recent study by the Center for Health Statistics of the Michigan Department of Health, reported in the *New York Times* (February 10, 1973), shows that the average life expectancy of Black men in Michigan dropped from 64 years to 61.4 years in the decade 1960-70. In this same period the life expectancy of white men, white women and Black women rose. In 1970 the life expectancy of white males was 68.2 years, an increase of 6 months. For white females it was 75.4 years, an increase of 1.3 years. And for Black females it was 70.1 years, an increase of 2 years.

According to a U.S. government study there were in 1969 only 587,000 Black males aged 65 years and over, or only 7 per cent of the total number of males in this age group, whereas Black men as a whole are about 11 per cent of the total male population. This further confirms the shorter life span of Black males. The same study shows that the death rate of Black males is consistently higher than that of white males in the prime working-age years.

Slave Labor and Wage Labor

To understand the working conditions of Black male production workers in basic industry today, we must go back to the conditions of Blacks during the days of chattel slavery in this country. U.S. slavery was a hybrid of the ancient slave system and the modern capitalist system and it combined the worst features of both. It was a slave system within a commodity-producing society.

In ancient slave society slaves produced not commodities for sale on the market but a surplus appropriated by the slaveowners for their own use. But since the possibility of such consumption is limited, the demand for labor from the slaves was also limited. In the U.S. slave economy, however, where the slaves were producing commodities—cotton, tobacco, etc.—for the world market, demand was not limited to the personal consumption of the slaveowners and the demand on the slaves to produce was accordingly unlimited.

It was this peculiarity of U.S. slavery that led Marx to speak of it

as the meanest and most shameless form of man's enslavement in the annals of history. In this system it became more profitable for the slave-owner to work a slave intensively, often using up his life in a decade of labor or less, and then to buy another slave, than to require an average expenditure of labor which would permit the slave to live a normal life span. (See *Capital*, International Publishers, New York, 1967, Vol. I, p. 236.)

Today the Black worker is no longer enslaved or working on the land but resides mainly in urban areas and works in industry as an operative, a laborer or in some other blue-collar category. But he still finds himself in a situation in which he is worked to death in less years than his white counterpart. Obviously the economic conditions of Black workers today is not as extreme as during the days of slavery. The fact remains, however, that the life expectancy of Black male workers is declining, that the trend toward longer life is being reversed.

The main cause of this is the kind of work they are forced to do and the intensity of labor imposed on them. The Michigan study attributes their shorter life span to alcohol, drugs, poverty and hard jobs. But we will show that the first three of these are in the main job-related and that the character of the job is the central factor.

Are Black People "Middle-Class"?

A number of writers maintain that the majority of Black people are now in the middle class. N. G. Wattenberg and R. M. Scammon, writing in *Commentary*, (April 1973) maintain that the majority can now be called middle class in terms of having good jobs and adequate education and incomes. Richard Rogan (*New York Times Magazine*, June 24, 1973) puts forth a similar view. A special issue of *Ebony* (August 1973) on "The Black Middle Class" presents definitions of "middle class" by a number of educators, sociologists, educators, psychiatrists and economists. All define it primarily in terms of income level and not in scientific terms.

But higher-paying jobs in industry do not put Black workers in the middle class. They remain wage workers, subjected to the killing pace, forced overtime and other working conditions which shorten their lives. Relatively higher wages do not change their class status. Income is not in itself a determinant of class.

Growth of employment of Black workers has been most outstanding in manufacturing, health and hospital services and government and public administration. On the other hand, in construction it has declined. In certain occupations the rise in percentages of Black workers

is especially striking. Here we want to focus on four categories in steel and auto: craftsmen, operatives, transportation equipment operators and laborers. Over 90 per cent of the Black workers in each of these two industries are in these categories. These workers, centered in production, are the ones who produce surplus value and, as we shall show, are the most superexploited workers in the country.

In these industries Black workers are in the main relegated to the hard, hot, heavy, dirty, bottleneck jobs. In auto they are concentrated in the foundry, on the assembly line, the body shop, paint, welding and working in the pit. In steel they are to be found in the dusty, gaseous, nauseous and dangerous jobs where they are most exposed to gases and chemicals. In addition, most of the Black youths—and young workers generally—are forced to work night shifts.

These workers, mostly Black and Brown and mainly city dwellers working in plants located in suburban areas, also face a problem of transportation to and from the job. In many cases no public transportation is available. Workers employed in such plants and having no automobiles of their own are dependent on other workers with cars to get them to and from work. If this arrangement breaks down, the workers lose time and may eventually have to quit. Where public transportation does exist, it may take up to two hours each way. All this is very exhausting and forces many workers to quit after a short time—that is, if they think they can find other jobs. It is much worse for night shift workers because transportation is much slower in off hours. Those who stick it out and commute in this way are often tired already on arrival at the job and are more prone to accidents, illness, etc. And by the time they get home they are usually completely exhausted. Another aspect of the transportation problem is the cost, which can range from \$4.00 to \$25.00 a week and which is not compensated by the employer.

A concrete example of these problems is Wayne County, which includes the city of Detroit and in which 42 per cent of the population is now Black. In the last ten years manufacturing jobs in Wayne County have grown by only 4 per cent, while in the predominantly white suburban areas in Oakland and Macon Counties such jobs have grown by 62 per cent and 53 per cent respectively. There is no way for Detroit Black workers to get to these jobs except by car; bus service is slow and unreliable. At the same time the jobs opening up in Detroit are mainly service and low-level white-collar jobs. And they employ more women than men, thus creating special problems for the families. Other significant groups of workers in Detroit, such as the Spanish speaking group and the Appalachian whites, are simi-

larly affected by the difficulties of getting to the job.

The Productivity Drive

Monopoly capital and its Washington agents are constantly clamoring for increased productivity on the grounds that this is necessary to save the dollar, to make the U.S. strong and better able to compete, and to make life better. But the productivity of U.S. workers is already the highest in the world and so are the profits of U.S. corporations.

Between 1947 and 1968, output per man-hour in manufacturing rose twice as fast as real take-home pay. And in recent years profits have soared. Between 1970 and 1972, corporate profits after taxes jumped from \$39.3 billion to \$55.4 billion, or by about 41 per cent, while in the same period wages and salaries rose by less than 14 per cent. In addition, in the first quarter of 1973 after-tax profits rose to an annual rate of \$66.9 billion, 28 per cent higher than the rate a year earlier.

Production and profits have risen especially in the auto industry during this period. And since the auto industry is among the biggest users of steel, this has led also to record production in the steel industry. Both industries have been operating at close to full capacity.

An article by Jack H. Morris in the *Wall Street Journal* (July 9, 1973) states that to meet the extraordinary demand for steel, especially from the auto industry, the mills shipped 56.9 million tons of steel in the first half of this year—an all-time record. The article also states that after six months of operations straining capacity the U.S. steel makers are beginning to question how much longer their men and machinery can hold up. And undoubtedly the auto industry faces similar problems. "You just can't work men and machinery overtime for as long as Detroit has," says one steel company analyst. But even if there is some easing of demand, the outlook is one of continued strain on production facilities and workers.

Present capacity in steel is not enough to meet demand. William H. Wylie, writing in the *Pittsburgh Press* (July 12, 1973), states that by 1980 U.S. mills will have to boost capacity greatly to meet global demands for steel. One result of the growing strain on existing capacity is the growing use of obsolescent plant and equipment, both in steel and in auto. And this, as we shall see, affects the working conditions of Black and Brown workers in these two industries.

This is not an across-the-board problem in these industries. Each of them has some of the most modern equipment in existence. But at the same time considerable sections are lagging in technology.

However, there appears to be a reluctance to make the necessary

investments in new plant and equipment and a motivation to continue to function with obsolete equipment. Thus, Chrysler in Detroit has old plants overrun with rats, with practically no air conditioning, with old-style machinery, with oily, slippery floors and the most unsanitary conditions imaginable. The reason is that it is more profitable to use cheap Black labor than to automate, because more surplus value is extracted from such labor where productivity remains up, with relatively less capital investment. At the same time there are indications that U.S. corporations are beginning to see a need of increasing capital investments to overcome technological lags.

Meanwhile, rising productivity is accompanied by a continual decline in the number of production workers in both steel and auto. A recent Labor Department report based on 1970 Census figures states that between 1965 and 1970 the number of production workers in auto fell from 659,000 to 613,000, and in steel from 538,000 to 501,000. The Michigan Employment Security Commission reports that in Detroit auto shops 20,000 less workers were producing 1972 cars than were involved in 1971 car production, while output was greater. According to the United Steelworkers, in 1960 461,000 workers produced some 99 million tons of steel, while in 1969 428,000 workers turned out 141 million tons.

If technological development has lagged in recent years and the number of production workers has continued to decline, it is clear that the record-breaking productivity in auto and steel must be due mainly to speedup, and only to a lesser degree to increased mechanization or automation. Some new, highly automated plants have been built in recent years, a leading example being the GM assembly plant at Lordstown, Ohio. But the corporations are mainly modernizing old plants. And in all cases the new mechanized and automated equipment is introduced in such a fashion as to intensify the labor of those workers not displaced by the new machinery.

Chrysler increased production by five units an hour in its Dodge Main plant without any noticeable increase in manpower. Black workers, who predominate in production there, found that they were doing the jobs of two white workers, whose jobs they got when those workers retired on pension. Ford increased its output drastically with only a small increase in the number of hourly-rated workers. GM, in 18 of its U.S. plants, slashed off 18,000 workers while demanding the same total output from those remaining and imposing thousands of disciplinary penalties. At Lordstown, GM recently laid off 700 workers after installing new equipment and demanded that the remaining workers produce as much as the bigger crew did before. This resulted

in the workers going on strike.

At the Buick plant in Flint, the work force was reduced and those who remained were pushed to produce five more cars an hour. Here, too, the workers threatened to strike. At the GM plant in St. Louis, where the work force has been reduced by 1,300 workers since 1971, the company is driving those left to turn out the same production as before and accusing them of sabotage if they do not.

The steel industry is introducing technological changes which will modify some processes and eliminate others. Among these changes is continuous casting, which is designed to eliminate the blooming mills, the mold preparation departments, the soaking pits and much of the transportation. The basic oxygen furnace, which produces as much steel in an hour as the open hearth furnace does in eight, is in the process of taking over completely. These developments also lead to increased speedup. Thus, in one Pittsburgh mill, the new process has increased the number of heats from 9-10 per shift to 43. Workers on this operation are asked to eat their lunch while they are working, since a cycle takes only 20 minutes. One controls operator and five-man crew turn out as much steel as a 32-man crew did before.

To increase the rate of surplus value by intensification of labor means accelerated expenditure of labor power, accelerated wear and tear on the workers. Greater intensity of labor requires more nourishment, medical care, etc. When these requirements are not fully satisfied, the condition of the working class worsens, despite wage increases. This is what is happening to production workers generally. But it is happening especially to Black workers, who form a growing percentage of all production workers and who are concentrated in the worst jobs.

The lengthening of the workday, another method by which the capitalist can increase his surplus value, is also increasingly used. There is a wide and growing use of overtime which, together with intensification of labor, is drastically increasing the incidence of accidents and occupational diseases, especially nervous tension, and leading to premature aging and death. At the same time, real wages have lagged behind the increase in the value of labor power due to the intensification of labor on the job. But even if they keep up with it, this would still not compensate for the increased wear and tear on workers and the increased rates of sickness and death.

One final point to be made with regard to increased exploitation on the job is the use of incentive payments to speed workers up. Many jobs in the steel industry, for example, are incentive jobs where the hourly earnings depend on the number of pieces a worker turns

out. The standard practice is, as soon as workers have stepped up their rate of production in order to increase their earnings, to change the piecework rates so that they end up by producing more for the same pay. Some workers, who are called "rate busters," fall for this, but more experienced workers, who are aware of the consequences, learn to time themselves accordingly.

Superexploitation and Workers' Health

Added to all this are the growing health hazards to which workers in these industries are subjected. These have been extensively studied by the Medical Committee for Human Rights, which reports the following facts:

1. In certain departments in both steel and auto, workers are subjected to large quantities of dust. Over a long period of time this results in emphysema, bronchitis, lung scarring and in some cases cancer. These lung ailments, which put a strain on the heart, are often followed by various forms of heart disease.

2. Workers are subjected to high levels of noise. The federal government states that 90 decibels is the maximum noise level that can be tolerated by workers. But in an ordinary punch press department in automobile assembly plants, the noise level is 95-105 decibels. After many years of working at such jobs, one of every six workers registers enough hearing loss to be declared legally deaf. After such exposure nerves are permanently damaged and ability to hear cannot be improved even with a hearing aid. Noise can also lead to damage to the circulatory system.

3. Workers may also be exposed to high degrees of heat, leading to dehydration—to water and salt loss. Acute dehydration can cause nausea and, in extreme cases, liver damage or shock leading to death.

According to the Michigan Department of Health study, workers in auto foundries live ten years less than workers on the average. In the steel industry, allegedly to meet foreign competition, companies are requiring workers to do work not in their job descriptions and are pushing inadequately trained individuals into dangerous situations. Added to this is the use of worn-out, unsafe equipment. As a result, the steel industry has one of the highest injury rates in the country.

Especially injurious is work in the coking plants. U.S. Steel's Clarenton works handles about 31,000 tons of coal a day. It is responsible for about one-third of the sulfur dioxide air pollution in the Pittsburgh area. It emits over 200 tons each day of air pollutants including fine dust, ammonia, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, chlorides and cyanides,

Coke ovens are the main killers in the steel industry. There is a rising number of cases of heart trouble, lung cancer, emphysema, black lung, tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases among steel workers as a result of exposure to gases and fumes. The rate is especially high among workers in coking plants, particularly those who work at the top of the ovens. And the workers in these plants are 80-90 per cent Black and Chicano. Black workers in these plants get lung cancer at much higher rate than white workers because a much higher percentage of them work at the top of the ovens.

United Steelworkers Local 1557 President Don Hannan notes that the incidence of lung cancer among workers at the top of the ovens is ten times that in the general population and also charges that emissions from quenching towers cause severe nausea, stomach distress and repeated trips to the hospital. When workers complain about the quenching process polluting the air, he says, the company gives them skin cream. When they complain about improperly maintained coke oven doors the company gives them respirators. The top management of U.S. Steel says its first obligation is to its stockholders. Meanwhile it goes on poisoning its workers, and especially its Black workers.

Workers' health is directly related to improvement of the air in and around the plants. The major problem is to reduce pollution by devices to capture pollutants emitted during the coking process. And it goes without saying that the workers' health would certainly be improved if the pace of work were not so fast. The whole union must take a stand against this policy of putting productivity and profits ahead of human life.

The steel companies have habitually refused to allow workers to leave the job when an accident occurs. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 has caused a number of them to be less stringent about this. But in every auto plant in the country workers constantly complain about the company's unwillingness to let sick or injured workers leave the assembly line and go home. In every case the company puts the cost of shutting down the line ahead of the lives of its workers.

As Lee Walker points out in his article "Racism and Speedup in an Auto Plant" (*Political Affairs*, June 1973), the company has figured out exactly what it costs to shut the line down for even a minute. So if a worker has a heart attack, he is simply pushed aside while other workers go on working over and around him until the ambulance comes to take him away. Countless examples of this inhuman callousness can be cited.

We have already noted that the Michigan study on the life span of workers gave the use of drugs and alcohol as two of the reasons

for the decline in the life span of Black male workers. This is connected with the prevalence of what are called "bottleneck jobs." These are jobs which require excessively fast work because of the difficulty of completing the job within the time allotted and because of speedup and excessive overtime. The pace demanded has a shattering impact on the nervous condition of the workers and drives them to seek some type of stimulant to enable them to stay with the job. The resort to drugs and alcohol is an added crutch to enable them to finish the day.

Extra Pressures on Black Workers

The question arises: why do Black workers put up with all the negative conditions we have described? The answer is that because of discrimination they simply do not have the mobility that white workers have. With the high rate of unemployment among Black workers it is not easy to find other work, and if a worker feels that he cannot hold on to the job there is someone else at the gate in need of it and ready to take it. Faced with these conditions, Black workers tend to put their best foot forward and to try to stick it out in spite of the deplorable conditions.

It is said that Ford hires about 600 Black workers a week who are laid off just before the completion of their 90-day trial period, hired at another plant and laid off again, and so on. This gives the company a revolving pool of desperate workers whose work load can be doubled or tripled.

According to Andrew F. Brimmer, a member of the Federal Reserve Board, the 1969-1970 recession had a disproportionately adverse effect on Black people. They not only bore a major share of the increase in unemployment but also shared to a lesser extent in the gains made during the recovery period. Even according to the official figures, the rate of unemployment among Black workers is currently about 10 per cent, and among Black youth it runs 30 per cent and more. Black people are thus faced with a condition of chronic economic depression, and this lies behind the lack of mobility of Black workers and their inability to quit jobs at will.

The companies complain about absenteeism. There is a substantial amount of it, primarily among young workers with no families and fewer responsibilities than older workers have. But it is not confined to them. From a health point of view it is necessary to take a few days off to rest once in a while. Workers put in a lot of overtime—nine to ten hours a day, six or seven days a week—and in many jobs in steel they have to work a full overtime shift, which means 16 straight hours. In addition they have personal business to take care of, for which they don't have time with a six- or seven-day work

week. The companies would like to have the public believe that these workers are just simply lazy, and many Blacks who have never seen the inside of an auto assembly plant tend to fall for this type of propaganda.

Another source of pressure on workers is the employment of hard-core unemployed workers, so-called, for whom the companies receive government funds. These workers, particularly parolees and welfare recipients, are then told to do the job or have their paroles or welfare cut off. In the case of women formerly on welfare, the government pays two-thirds of the cost of employing them during their first year. In the second year the companies can write off 82 per cent of the wages paid to them for tax purposes.

When these women begin making \$200-250 a week through large amounts of overtime, they want to hold onto these jobs. They are under extreme pressure to produce in order to get through the 90-day trial period and make seniority. During that period they can be laid off by the company with practically no cause, and they know that if they lose the jobs they will be unable to get welfare benefits. They therefore do their utmost to maintain the back-breaking speedup and to avoid absenteeism. The same goes for parolees. Thus the companies make added profits from hiring these workers in a number of ways—through government subsidies, through pressure on them for increased speedup and exemplary attendance, and through using them as a source of pressure on the other workers.

The companies have also found that they can get more work out of Black workers when they have Black supervisors over them, so they have begun to promote a growing number of Black workers into supervisory positions, including the promotion of Black women workers into foremen's jobs. It should be noted that the same thing is happening in South Africa—placing Black workers as drivers over other Black workers and taking advantage of a spirit among these workers of wanting to cooperate to help the so-called Black foremen succeed in their "upgraded" jobs. The U.S. corporations play up these promotions as democratic, generous acts. But they are no such thing. Their real purpose is to get more production, not to upgrade Black workers.

In the preceding pages we have tried to spell out the killing pressures and working conditions to which Black workers are subjected, and how these contribute to the decline in longevity of Black males reported in the Michigan study. To this, one final point must be added: the high rate of poverty among Black people. According to the latest government figures, 7.7 million Blacks or one-third of the Black population subsisted below the poverty line in 1972. And these

are people suffering extreme privation, malnutrition and disease, cutting many years from their life span.

Here we have the four causes assigned by the Michigan study for the decrease in life expectance: drugs, alcohol, poverty and hard jobs. We have tried to show that the central factor is the hard jobs, that unemployment, which breeds poverty, compels Black workers to hold on to such jobs, and that drugs and alcohol are used as stimulants to make it possible to keep up with the killing pace of production, also as a means of relaxation and escape after working hours.

The Struggle Against Superexploitation

We come now to the question of the struggle against these inhuman conditions imposed on Black workers. In this connection it is in order to pose the following questions: What are the unions doing about these conditions? What is the union leadership doing? What is the rank and file doing? What are the Black workers themselves doing? And what additional programs and actions are called for?

More specifically, what are the policies of the leaders of the steel and auto unions, particularly of their presidents, I. W. Abel and Leonard Woodcock? Both see the preservation of the capitalist system as having top priority, and both speak of the common interest between labor and management and hence of the need for cooperation between the two. Both give their stamp of approval to the inclusion of productivity and speedup clauses in union contracts. Both, who were members of the Pay Board in the initial stages of the wage freeze, now serve on the Committee for Industrial Peace. Both fail to conduct any real struggle against racism and against the discrimination imposed on Black and other nationally oppressed workers in their industries. And both avoid like the plague the involvement of the rank-and-file workers in making policy and in struggle against the corporations.

In the experimental negotiating agreement accepted by Abel and in the UAW settlement with Chrysler we can see the consequences of this class-collaborationist line. The "experimental negotiating agreement" guarantees the right of management to be the sole determining voice with regard to rest rules and other working conditions, eliminates the right to strike and commits the union to submit all unresolved bargaining issues to compulsory arbitration. Abel, in a speech before the Fifth Annual Collective Bargaining Forum, held in May 1973, makes it clear that this was not a sudden decision on the part of the steel union leadership but that he had been moving in this direction since he became president in 1965.

That the racism and class collaborationism of the steel union lead-

ership are closely linked is demonstrated by union documents, as for example in the union's reaction to recent court orders to eliminate discriminatory seniority programs. In a confidential, internally circulated document reacting to these court orders, the union complains that when it supported the passage of the Civil Rights Act, it did so "based upon our understanding that Title VII was to have no effect upon seniority systems existing at the time of its passage!" It further admits that, "In most steel plants, minority group employees are concentrated in certain departments and virtually non-existent in others . . . our seniority system contains the elements which the courts have found to 'lock in' the victims of the company's discrimination." But far from expressing concern at this gross violation of the rights of the Black steelworkers whom the union supposedly represents, the union stresses that the issue should be "disposed of in advance of the 1974 negotiations" or else "the resulting tensions could seriously threaten the ENA."

Abel justifies his call for increased productivity on the grounds of meeting foreign competition. But James West, in his article "The Coming Storm in Steel" (*Political Affairs*, September 1973), effectively exposes this. West shows that steel imports do not threaten jobs, that in reality steel in this country is in short supply and that at midyear the steel mills, working at full capacity, could not meet demand. Were it not for steel imports, many workers in steel fabricating and in auto would be out of work. And were it not for imports of raw materials large numbers of steelworkers would be without jobs.

Abel's acceptance of compulsory arbitration is a complete sellout. It gives everything to management. It also helps suppress workers' initiative and militancy. Without the right to strike the steelworkers are at the mercy of the companies. Steel management will make few concessions, preferring to submit the issues to arbitration in the expectation that the rulings will be mainly to their advantage.

Woodcock and the UAW leadership speak the same language as Abel. At the UAW Economic Conference in Detroit in March 1973, Woodcock, in the collective bargaining program he presented, stated: "The UAW therefore proposes that the management and the union acknowledge in writing that their relationship be one of mutual respect and responsibility; that the growth and success of the company are in the direct interests of the workers and their union, and that the growth and success of the union are of direct interest to the company. Each party therefore pledges respect, understanding and cooperation with the other and covenants that it will not in any way impede the growth or success of the other."

Neither the auto nor the steel unions are waging a real struggle

against company prerogatives, i.e. company control of hours, working conditions, safety, etc. But these company prerogatives are employed to accomplish the superexploitation of Black workers.

In the previous negotiations the Woodcock leadership agreed to a productivity clause without consulting the membership. In the Chrysler agreement just concluded this brand of trade union leadership is continued. Like the steel union, the UAW agreed to a 3 per cent wage increase each year. But in the Chrysler agreement, the UAW leadership, in the name of limiting compulsory overtime, agreed to a 9-hour day and 6-day week with one Saturday in three off. This will hurt all the workers, but it will hurt the Black workers especially. The trial period has been extended from 90 days to six months, and the rate of pay for new employees has been cut to 45 cents below the base pay in the industry. With the higher rate of turnover which will result the company is in a position to make substantial added profits through the reduced pay of new employees.

New workers will now have to survive 180 days of being *pace setters* for the "normal" back-breaking speedup to make seniority, setting an impossible pace for themselves and all the workers. Hardest hit will be the Black women who have been forced off welfare. With regard to the foundry it was agreed to set up a company-union committee, which will not even be called into being until the third year of the contract, to study the question of whether or not working in the foundry has a negative effect on the health of the workers.

In the face of the stampede of most of the trade union leadership to compulsory arbitration and other betrayals of the workers' interests, the need for rank-and-file organization and struggle becomes more urgent than ever. In both steel and auto the rank and file must move to build movements national in scope and based on the production workers, movements which will lead the necessary struggles against the conditions with which we have dealt in this paper, movements which will fight to develop the kind of class-struggle unionism needed to advance the interests of the working class.

In this article we have described the process of superexploitation of Black workers, which forms the backdrop for the special role which Black workers play in both the liberation movement and in the working-class movement. At the present time the struggles of Black workers are taking diverse forms: Black caucuses, participation in rank-and-file movements, movements of elected union officials and others. The further development of such forms requires the closest attention of all progressives, with the aim of enhancing the unity and consciousness of the working class and forming a close alliance of the working class and Black people.

Short History of Chicano Workers

I recently had the opportunity to discuss the Communist Party's pamphlet *Toward Chicano Liberation* before an economics class in one of the local colleges in California. A young Chicana irritatedly said: "What is this worker, worker, worker? Can't you people speak about anything else but workers?" This young woman's irritation comes as a result of misunderstanding the Marxist definition of a worker.

This definition is based on the Marxist concept that the *mode of production* of material needs *conditions the social, political and intellectual life processes in general*. In the words of Marx, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, *their social existence determines their consciousness*." (Preface, *Critique of Political Economy*, International Publishers, New York, 1971. Emphasis added.)

What does this mean in plain worker's language? And what does it mean in present-day U.S. society? When we place our emphasis on workers, does this mean that we are anti-intellectual or anti-student? Not at all. In fact, we are for workers receiving as much education as possible. Why? Because today's industry, today's technology require an educated working class and will require it to an increasing extent in the future. Modern industry, with its high technological level, needs managers, technicians, engineers and scientists of all kinds. These are people who work for wages and who meet all the requirements of being workers. Our revolutionary goal is to reach such intellectuals, along with other workers, who see themselves as workers and not as capitalists, and who will work to build a society for the benefit of all people and not just for a few.

It is also important that we as working people understand the false concept of "middle-class" which the bourgeoisie has introduced. The fact is that the great majority of those whom they place in the "middle class" are in reality workers—people working eight hours a day, five days a week and drawing wages like all other workers.

A History of Oppression

Chicanos are to be found in all categories of workers, but in their great majority they are to be found in the hardest, dirtiest and hottest jobs in modern industry, most often in unorganized shops. For Chicano workers job promotion has meant a long, hard-fought battle extending over all of their history.

Great power chauvinism, racism, discrimination, terror and deportation have been the main weapons used by capitalism to block the advance of the Chicano workers. Historically, Chicanos have been among the last hired and first fired. All of these undemocratic and terrorist tactics are designed to keep the Chicano workers in the status of a source of cheap labor—of surplus labor in times of recession and readily available cheap labor in times of economic upsurge.

Many of the racist tactics developed against Black slaves and the genocidal tactics developed to eliminate the Indian population have been used also against Mexican and Chicano workers. The National Guard, vigilante groups, hangings, kidnappings, the police, the Immigration Service, court injunctions, peace bonds and all sorts of other devices—legal and illegal—have been used to keep the Chicano worker in his place, that is, at the lowest economic level. He has been confined to segregated towns where the company is the master—the law, the prosecutor and the jury. Oppression, segregation and superexploitation have been the norm for all Chicano people. Yet through all of this they have struggled and survived.

These policies of oppression were laid down by the President of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston, following the 1846-1848 war of conquest as a result of which the United States expropriated from Mexico the richest half of that country's territory. Houston said: "The Anglo-Saxon must pervade the whole southern extremity of this vast continent. The Mexicans are no better than the Indians and I see no reason why we should not take their land."

It was in accordance with this policy that U.S. capitalism proceeded to violate the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which sought to protect the land, language and customs of the people who chose to remain within the expropriated territory. But imperialism was as disrespectful of treaties then as it is now. So the rich proceeded to steal most of the land, water rights and mines of the Chicano people.

Not only did they squander the region's natural resources but they also attempted to wipe out the centuries of history and culture of its inhabitants, thus reducing them to mere appendages of the developing U.S. nation. Today, therefore, we find very little recognition that the ancestors of the Chicanos were travelling and exploring this area long before any Anglo-Saxon ever set foot on these shores. It is only through extensive research and the study of unburned fragments of documents that we are able to establish that this people has a rich history and has made important contributions to the development of this country.

For example, in 1800 Colonel José Carrasco discovered the most

famous copper mine in the West, the Santa Rita copper mine in western New Mexico, now part of the Chino Mines Division of Kennecott Copper Corporation. This mine is best known to the Chicano community through the workers' film "Salt of the Earth." By 1804 it employed more than 600 Mexican and Indian miners. The copper ore was shipped by ox cart and mule train to the city of Chihuahua, Mexico for smelting. This is an indication that this people had long experience in the mining and smelting of copper and other ores.

Mexico had its gold rush at Zacatecas in 1548, 300 years before the California gold rush. And in 1849 we find thousands of Mexicans, Chileans, Peruvians and even Blacks mining in California. It is reported that there may have been 1,000 Black miners in the area.

The Bisbee Mine in southern Arizona, which is now owned by Phelps Dodge, was discovered in 1875. The 1930 Census lists 16,668 Mexicans engaged in mining in the area, 3,880 in coal and 12,788 in copper.

Contributions were made also in weaving, sheep and cattle raising, citrus farming and irrigation. Later came the discoveries of rich oil deposits in Texas, New Mexico and California.

Exploitation and Struggle

By the time Arizona and New Mexico were admitted into the Union in 1912 we find restrictions being imposed on the employment of Chicano labor. At Arizona's Constitutional Convention in 1911 a measure was introduced which would hold the employment of Chicano labor in mining and other industries to 20 per cent of the payroll.

The mining companies had good reason to fear the Chicano workers, for despite the open promotion of antagonisms and the use of sheriffs and police to divide the workers, they fought back. In 1915 and again in 1917 the miners in Clifton, Morenci and Metcalf struck under the leadership of the IWW. The National Guard was brought in to break the strikes. There took place the infamous Bisbee deportation in which 4,000 miners were forced into railroad cars provided by the El Paso-Pacific Railroad and were left in the middle of the New Mexico desert in the hope that they would die of thirst and heat.

Agriculture and cannery workers up and down the states of California and Texas have a history of militant strikes organized and led by Chicanos. The most recent have been those of the United Farm Workers, led by Cesar Chavez, which is at this moment fighting for its life against a joint attack by the growers and the Teamsters Union.

Especially significant historically was the strike of agricultural workers in 1937. Some 55,000 struck in the Imperial Valley in California.

Seven Communist strike leaders were jailed. And then as now the Teamsters Union was brought in by the growers and given "sweet-heart" contracts. As a result of this the strikes were broken, something which could not be accomplished by extensive use of vigilantes, sheriffs and scabs.

The important role of Chicano labor in producing the country's food supply is shown in the fact that by 1929 the Southwest was producing 500,000 carloads of vegetables and fruits, or 50 per cent of the national supply. Chicano workers were 80 per cent of the farm labor used to produce these crops. Out of this has grown the idea that Chicanos are in the main farm workers or peasants.

But this is not so. Thus, as of 1950 Mexican or Chicano workers were 90 per cent of the work force in 18 western railroad companies. Their prevalence among railroad workers is indicated also by the fact that Chicano *barrios* are located near most railroad centers of the Midwest. This is why there are today some 300,000 Chicanos living in and around Chicago.

As is indicated by the proposition of Arizona's Constitutional Convention it was never the intent of the developing U.S. corporations to hire great numbers of Mexican workers, who were characterized by the racist epithets of "lazy" and "irresponsible." In the development of Texas after the Louisiana Purchase it was Black slave labor that was to be used. But in California, on the other hand, the racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the "gentlemen's agreement" with Japan in 1907 left a void which had to be filled by large-scale importation of Mexican labor.

Therefore a policy was adopted by the big growers of importation of Mexican labor in times of harvest and mass deportation after the crops were picked. This policy persists to this very day. It is an extremely oppressive policy that violates the most basic human rights of workers. It includes denial of due process of law, denial of decent housing, breaking up of families and outright stealing of workers' wages. It embodies the most inhuman treatment of workers whose sole crime is to seek work and who, more often than not, come to the United States at the invitation of the employers. This policy, which forms the basis of the Rodino Bill now pending in Congress, is the most reactionary and inhuman immigration policy ever imposed.

We could go on citing the methods used by the capitalists to oppress Chicano workers. But we could not get to the root of the problem without discussing and understanding how these same capitalists have succeeded in *using the white workers to the detriment of the Chicano workers and of the white workers themselves*. It is the use

and conscious perpetuation of white chauvinism on the job that gives rise to the terrible discrimination, hate and division within the working class. Chicano workers know deep within their hearts that white workers know better, *that it is opportunism among them that has opened the door for employers to carry on their policy of oppression.* They also know that only when the white workers resolve to do something about this problem will the workers acting together be able to defeat capitalism. *The white workers must decide for themselves which side they are on.* The Meanys, Fitzsimmonses, Abels and Woodcocks are not going to do it for them. They, the white workers at the shop level, must make that resolve *if they wish to save themselves, their jobs and their families.*

Despite their inhuman treatment by the ruling class and despite insufficient support from white workers, the Chicano workers have made some very important gains. Despite their most careful plans the capitalists can never solve all their contradictions, and it is these basic contradictions, not the benevolence of capitalism or the initiative of white workers, that have opened the door for the stabilization of the position of the Chicano population. There are also the heroic struggles of the Chicano workers.

Chicanos today form an integral part of the U.S. nation. They struggle for complete equality with all other sections of the population, including the development of their own historical culture and language. Ninety-five per cent of the ten to twelve million Chicanos and other Latin peoples are within the working class. Eighty per cent of them reside in urban centers. Therefore, we are speaking here of urban workers who are ready, willing and able to join in working-class struggles seeking the solutions to problems affecting all workers—problems such as excessive prices, rents and taxes, poor housing, deterioration of education, declining medical care. Above all they are ready to join in the fight for world peace, for they understand perfectly well that only the rich profit from war while the poor grow poorer.

We are also speaking here of a body of workers who are ready to join all other workers, to enter the ranks of engineers, planners, scientists, etc. They are ready to accept full responsibility for producing to the best of each person's ability, so long as they produce for the benefit of all the people, but they are not ready to do so under second-class citizenship.

The Story of Mine-Mill

Perhaps one of the most interesting pieces of militant labor history

is the story of the role of Chicano, Black and white rank-and-file workers in the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union. This union, which was the successor of the Western Federation of Miners, did a magnificent job of organizing in the non-ferrous mining industry in the late thirties and early forties under the banner of the CIO.

But its success in organizing extended only to the unskilled and semi-skilled production workers. The skilled workers, Anglos for the most part, chose to remain in the craft unions. This resulted in the creation of a dozen small, powerless unions, and the burden for conducting any really effective negotiations thus fell upon the shoulders of the production workers. In the Southwest these were in the main Chicano miners and in the South they were mainly Black workers. Only in the East, Midwest and Northwest were there largely Anglo workers in the Union.

After World War II came an upsurge of the anti-Communist drive. In 1947 the Taft-Hartley Act was passed with its Section 9H prohibiting Communists from holding union office. In 1949 Mine-Mill was thrown out of the CIO along with eleven other Left-led unions. An alliance was then formed to destroy Mine-Mill. The mining corporations, the United Steelworkers and the federal Justice Department joined in a well-financed, well-organized drive, based on anti-Communism, to destroy the union.

In order to hold its own, Mine-Mill had to consolidate its strength to meet the onslaught of raiding by the United Steelworkers, legal actions by the Justice Department and attacks by the corporations. In these struggles two organizational forms were adopted by the workers: 1) the formation of company-wide bargaining councils, and 2) the organization of a Black and Brown caucus to deal with area wage differentials and discrimination. (Neither form is now permitted within the United Steelworkers, with which Mine-Mill eventually merged.)

It was through these company-wide councils that the workers were able to render ineffective the 80-day "cooling-off" periods imposed under the Taft-Hartley Act to restrain unions from striking. The companies found that they could not tolerate the chill of non-producing workers. An interesting feature of these councils is that for the most part they were under Chicano leadership.

The Unorganized

It is well known that only about 20 per cent of U.S. labor is organized. To the queries of a *Business Week* reporter on this point, George Meany replied that he did not give a damn that not more

workers are organized. "We don't need them," he said. This attitude is expressed especially when it comes to small sweatshops employing mostly minority group workers. This is why we find thousands upon thousands of unorganized workers in the major urban centers of the United States. In the Southwest these unorganized workers are mostly Chicano workers and mostly women.

It has long been the attitude of most unions that these sweat-shop workers are unorganizable and are a liability even when they can be successfully organized. The complaint is that these workers have more grievances and problems than the organizers can handle and that the income from union dues of these low-paid workers is not even enough to pay the organizer's wages. Thus, when small shops are organized the result is often that dues are collected but no service is rendered to the workers. They have a union in name only.

This was the attitude held for many years toward organization of migrant farm workers. But when the United Farm Workers found a solution that answers the needs of these workers, we find the Teamsters' union suddenly expressing a great interest in organizing farm workers. However, this is a phony interest. The only real concern of the Teamsters' union is to assist the growers in destroying an effective union—a union that has brought dignity and hope to the farm workers.

There exists today a great need for an all-out drive to organize the sweatshops of the major urban centers. This is where the Teamsters or any other union could well spend its money. There are many thousands of unorganized workers in the garment, electrical and other industries. These are industries which hire a great number of women and especially Chicano and other minority group women.

Contrary to the popular belief that Chicanas do not work, nearly 37 per cent of them are in the labor force today. In the Southwest the proportion may well be higher. Among Chicanas with children under six years of age, 29.8 per cent are in the labor force, compared to 28.4 per cent among white women. In the light of these facts the *machismo* concept that Chicano men don't permit their wives to work falls apart. On the other hand, the need of two wage earners to make ends meet in today's U.S. economic system is as prevalent among Chicanos as among other sectors of the population.

Over-all earnings of Chicanas are lower than those of white women, though in general the differences are not as great as in the case of men. But in both cases the wages of women are much lower than those of men, an indication of the fact that both white and minority group women are used by industry as a source of cheap labor. About 14 per cent of Chicano women are heads of households, slightly more

than in the case of white women as a whole.*

U.S. Plants in Mexico

A very important problem confronting the U.S. labor movement is that created by the growing number of U.S. manufacturing plants in Mexico, just south of the U.S.-Mexican border. It is a problem on which little study has been done and on which, consequently, labor is dragging its feet.

Estimates of the number of these factories range from 150 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to as high as 350-400 by other sources. But it is certain that their number has escalated rapidly since they were initiated a number of years ago.

Products turned out in these plants cannot be sold in Mexico but must be exported directly to the United States. Trucks from the United States go into the plants loaded with raw materials or component parts. They drive out loaded with nearly finished products ready for final assembly and for marketing as U.S. products under U.S. brand names. At times this involves nothing more than fitting the product into a plastic case and labelling it. This is done in small U.S. plants or at warehouses, where the trade union label is added to complete the process before placing the goods for sale on the U.S. market.

The Mexican workers are paid as little as 15-20 cents an hour, with practically no fringe benefits, while the U.S. corporations receive tremendous tax breaks in addition to tremendous savings on wages. But U.S. workers—union or non-union—gain nothing. In fact, they stand in danger of losing their own jobs because of the threat of runaway shops. Even more, workers on both sides of the border are exploited through the low wage scales. The irony, the insult to workers on both sides, is that U.S. trade unions (IBEW, Teamsters and others) fully cooperate with this setup.

U.S. diplomacy uses the guise of benevolence in order to obtain the support of the Mexican bourgeoisie and its *charro* (subservient) unions for this policy. This is being done, it is said, to help Mexico's poor people, and as a contribution to the good neighbor policy between the U.S. and Mexico.

But it is really a policy of which Mario Gill, in his book *Nuestros Buenos Vecinos (Our Good Neighbors)* correctly says that it is "designed to annex the whole of Mexico into the U.S. economy. It is a policy of U.S. imperialism." That it is and Meany, who supports all

* The figures presented here are taken from Paul M. Ryscavage and Earl F. Mellor, "The Economic Situation of Spanish Americans," *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1973.

U.S. imperialist policies, also supports this one. He has supported it for years through his CIA and monopoly contacts.

But what U.S. workers and trade unionists must bear in mind is that this policy is directed not only toward Mexico but also toward countries like Taiwan, South Korea, South Vietnam and toward developing countries throughout the world. Secondly, it is a policy which in no way serves the interests of U.S. or foreign workers. The road to replacing it with a policy in favor of the workers lies in the building of direct contacts between workers of different countries and in a program of strengthening trade union ties and common action through the world trade union movement.

Some Points of Emphasis

From the foregoing we can reach certain conclusions which I hope will serve as guidelines for work, principally for trade union rank-and-file movements, Communists and other democratic forces who are concerned with developing a strong, class-conscious working-class movement in the United States.

First, I hope that this particular article will be found useful by the Chicano liberation forces. There are today, according to some trade union observers, about 300-400 Chicano labor leaders in the state of California alone. This force is numerically strong enough so that if it were properly oriented and took a rank-and-file approach to problems, it could do much to influence the direction of AFL-CIO and Teamster labor policy. Such is not the case now but it can happen and is necessary for the democratic interests of the Chicano workers. An example can be drawn from Cesar Chavez's union leadership. The work of the Chicanos in leadership during the IWW days and the height of the Mine-Mill period, as opposed to what is happening now in the United Steelworkers, should also be carefully studied. If this article only convinces Chicano workers of the importance of attending union meetings to conduct a struggle, it will be a significant contribution.

Second, I wish to emphasize the thought expressed in the opening pages of this paper, namely, that it is the working and living conditions faced by workers in this country that *in the main shape their lives*.

An example of this is given by the 1970 statistics on language spoken by Chicanos. These show that in California, which experienced the largest immigration from Mexico, Spanish is spoken less than in New Mexico, which experienced the least immigration. Many theories could be advanced to explain such a phenomenon, but if we

are to stick to our Marxist principles we must conclude that it is the rapid and extensive development of industry, especially during the Second World War, which was the cause of this seemingly peculiar development. Many other things could be cited to substantiate this point—attitudes, changes in dress style, dance, living habits. In the main it is the mode of production—the means of making a livelihood required by modern industry—which is responsible for the changes that have taken place among the Chicano people.

It is important to take note of this role of the economic base because certain "Left" forces have been attempting to promote going back to Indian culture as a way out for the Chicano people. This is a ridiculous proposition. It is not Marxism, it is not workers' language. It is petty-bourgeois radicalism seeking to draw the movement toward the support of an isolationist point of view which leads nowhere. Such ideological garbage is useful only to the monopolies, and it does not matter whether these "Leftists" are conscious of it or not.

If we listen to and study carefully the demands of the liberation movement, we have to conclude that these are demands of a particular people, the Chicano people, whose struggles constitute an important segment of the national class struggle. The relationship of forces demands that we address ourselves toward developing a powerful antimonopoly, anti-imperialist program. For us the arena of struggle is within the U.S.A. The demands are those of a true liberation movement and are directed against U.S. monopolies and against the government bodies (local, state and national) who are responsible for upholding the power of the monopolies. Our aim is to unite the labor movement into a responsible working-class movement which will look after the interests of all the U.S. workers in a resolute and militant manner. An earnest effort is being made to develop statistical data on these questions in the hope that it will provide better definition of issues and better answers on which to base the liberation struggle. Doing this will identify who is and who will continue to be the Chicano people's best allies.

Third, experience shows that the formation of militant Chicano caucuses and company-wide workers' councils have been the most successful methods of work for Chicanos in the trade union movement. Where it has been possible to integrate these bodies with white, Black and in some cases Asian workers, the struggles have been tremendously enhanced. Consequently, today's labor leaders frown upon and actively fight such formations. But if we are to change the trade union movement in the interests of the membership, we need to return to that form of work.

Fourth, such a system must be based on a strong plant-by-plant steward system guided by rank-and-file interests. Stewards should be given time off with pay to attend training schools.

Fifth, reactionary anti-working class government policies affect Chicanos as well as other national groupings. In fact, their first impact is on the Chicano and Black populations as well as on other sectors of the poor. But when progressive legislation is adopted the opposite holds true. Therefore the solution of the problems of the Chicano people are inseparable from the solution of the problems of the working class as a whole. At the same time it is in the self-interest of all sectors of the working class to assist in every possible way in solving the problems of the Chicano people. This must be done in a meaningful way, through joint action, with the working class, which is in its majority white, leading the struggle.

If such struggles were taking place today we would not be faced with such problems as the Teamster-grower coalition against the United Farm Workers. Obviously, such an action stems from an extremely racist trade union policy.

Sixth, even though 87 per cent of the population of Mexican origin still resides in the five western states, migration into other states is taking place. For example, at the Raza Unida Conference in El Paso, Texas in September 1972, 18 states were represented. Therefore we should not regard the Chicano problem as a regional one; rather, we must see it as a national problem requiring national solutions.

Seventh, Chicanos are a city people. Urbanization among them is practically as great as among the population as a whole. In addition, a very large part of the rural workers are machine operators—workers, not peasants.

In their largest numbers, Chicano workers are employed in manufacturing, construction and mining. They are mainly operatives, craftsmen and laborers. According to a *Business Week* report, in the western states they hold from 32 to 50 per cent of the jobs in basic industry.

Chicano workers are concentrated especially in underground mining. Some of these mines in Arizona and New Mexico operate with 85 per cent to nearly 100 per cent Chicano labor. In fact there are some places in which the only whites who go underground are supervisors or engineers.

The percentage of Chicano workers in basic industry is much higher than their percentage in the population as a whole. According to the Census figures, in Texas 14.5 per cent of the population is Chicano, in Colorado 10.2 per cent, in New Mexico 34.6 per cent, in Arizona 16

per cent, and in California 13.5 per cent. To be sure the Census figures undercount the Chicano population, but not nearly enough to negate the basic pattern.

This indicates the basis for the stability of the Chicano population, since these jobs today are maintained through the operation of seniority clauses. It also explodes the jingoist picture of the "lazy Mexican."

Furthermore it poses the demand for effective Chicano representation in the higher levels of leadership of the trade unions. There are at present no Chicano or Black executive board members in the United Steelworkers or in the California AFL-CIO setup. I know of only one Chicano (J. J. Rodriguez) who holds a statewide executive office. Though I have no precise knowledge with regard to other unions, the indications are that the situation is pretty much the same.

We must emphasize again that the high proportion of Chicano workers in basic industry means their predominance in the hottest, hardest, dirtiest and most unsafe jobs, just as is true of Black workers. Only economic need forces these workers to stick to the drudgery, speedup and unsafe conditions of these jobs. But the fact that they do so demonstrates something else. It lays bare the jingoist and racist character of the attacks on minority workers and welfare recipients by the Nixons and the Reagans, of their charges that minority group people do not want to work.

Our Party's decision to single out racism as the issue that cuts through all problems expresses a true Marxist-Leninist approach. Racism is a cancer in U.S. society that must be eliminated. It is the most divisive weapon of the ruling class. Our task is to unite all democratic forces—white, Black, Yellow, Red and Brown—against the oppression of the monopolies. The situation dictates it.

(Continued from page 1)

an abstract "understanding" of them. A concluding presentation by Gus Hall on "The Struggle for Working Class Unity" summarized some of the results of the conference and drew some necessary conclusions from it. In it, he stated, "The purpose of this conference is not to write a book, although I understand that may happen. We do not acquire knowledge for the pleasure of knowing. Our studies have a clear purpose, and that is to better equip ourselves to lead our class in struggle." It is only such use of these materials which will fulfill the aims of the conference.

Puerto Rican Workers

This paper will deal with the role of Puerto Rican workers in working-class struggles in the United States. Within that context we must deal with the fact that Puerto Rican workers have migrated to this country mainly as a result of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and that they are a nationally oppressed minority in the United States. Therefore we must first discuss the national question in relation to the U.S. working class.

The national question comes into play when one considers all aspects of Puerto Rican workers' conditions in the United States. Discrimination befalls them in all areas—social, economic and political. Along with other oppressed minorities they fall into the category of "last hired, first fired." The Puerto Rican workers suffer a high rate of unemployment, and when they are employed it is most often in the lowest-paying, dead-end jobs. Only a small percentage are organized and often these find themselves in undemocratic or weak unions.

Discrimination against youth and women greatly affect this minority. The median age of Puerto Ricans in this country is less than 20 years. And in a high percentage of Puerto Rican families, both leading members of the household must work in order to make ends meet.

A vicious cycle, arising from lack of education and educational opportunities, adversely affects this community. Due to the economic conditions of the Puerto Rican family, a low level of education is perpetuated by the fact that the young must often divert their attention from their education to seeking jobs for a livelihood. Economic deprivation, the slum conditions of ghetto life, the language barriers, the discrimination and the fact that both parents must often devote all their time to working and are unable to help their young sufficiently with their schooling, all serve to perpetuate this vicious cycle.

The disadvantages suffered by Puerto Rican youth are similar to those suffered by youth of other oppressed minorities. This educational gap places Puerto Rican youth at a great disadvantage in the competition for the few opportunities available in the modern technological job market. And this, along with persistent racism and discrimination, explains the mounting unemployment among Puerto Rican youth. Unemployment in turn often leads to despair and turns the youth to drugs and other escapist paths, which worsens social conditions for all Puerto Ricans.

Puerto Rican Workers: Status and Distribution

With this background in mind we turn to the situation of Puerto

Rican workers. There are over 1.5 million Puerto Ricans in the United States today. More than two-thirds of them reside in New York and close to a million in New York City. Nearly 325,000 are workers. If we allow an average of three members per family, well over 90 per cent of the Puerto Rican community is working-class. There is practically no bourgeoisie and there is only a small petty bourgeoisie. There is a small but increasing number of professionals—lawyers, doctors, artists, teachers, engineers, etc.

The bulk of the Puerto Rican workers are in New York City. They are in the garment industry, in the service industries (hotel, restaurant, hospital, building maintenance), in civil service (firemen, policemen, sanitation workers, clerical workers). Some are teachers and some are in service and anti-poverty programs. They are also employed in the electrical, auto, transport, longshore, maritime, furniture and jewelry industries as well as in the distributive and produce industries.

In fact, Puerto Rican workers are widely dispersed in most basic industries throughout the country. They are to be found in steel, auto, rubber, etc., in Cleveland, Lorain and other Ohio cities, and in Chicago and other parts of Illinois. Detroit, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and other midwestern cities have sizeable Puerto Rican communities, as do Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut. In some areas, especially in New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and upstate New York, we find sizeable numbers of Puerto Ricans in migrant farm workers' camps. There are also migrant farm workers in Florida and other parts of the South. Puerto Ricans are to be found all along the West Coast and in Hawaii and Alaska.

The chief reason for such a wide dispersion of Puerto Rican workers throughout the United States, despite the massive concentration in New York City, is specifically the search for jobs. Keep in mind that colonial conditions in Puerto Rico give rise to unemployment three times as high as in the United States, along with a higher cost of living and lower wages. This has led to a considerable amount of emigration.

Puerto Ricans migrated to Hawaii at the turn of the century to work in the canefields. At about the same time they went to Southern California and to the Northwest, including Alaska, to work in agriculture, maritime, longshore, fishing and gold prospecting. They went to the East Coast where the jobs traditionally available were in migrant farm labor, contracted through Puerto Rican Commonwealth government agents at slave wages and rotten working conditions.

When their contracts were up, most of these farm workers did not return to the economic plight they faced in Puerto Rico. Many went to New York City to work in light manufacturing and in the garment and service industries. More recently the trend has been to migrate to the Midwest in search of the "better" jobs in basic industry.

Economic Conditions

In figures prepared by the Economic Commission of the CPUSA from the 1970 Census statistics the economic plight of the Puerto Rican community is clearly demonstrated.

According to the Census figures, 29 per cent of Puerto Rican families had incomes below the officially designated poverty level (\$3,743 a year for a family of four) in 1969, compared to 8.6 per cent of all white families. The Commission, using a figure of 125 per cent of the poverty level, finds that of 873,000 Puerto Ricans in New York State, 43.4 per cent (close to 400,000) had incomes below this level as against 11 per cent of all whites. The Commission chose the 125 per cent level because it felt that the official level was ridiculously low. But even this level (\$4,679 a year for a family of four) is ridiculously low. People with much higher incomes are actually living in poverty. We are familiar with the difficulties that a family of two or three has in living on incomes substantially higher than \$4,679 a year. Certainly a family of four faces quite an ordeal trying to remain afloat on such an income, especially now, when prices are considerably higher than in 1969.

The picture is even more bleak when we compare income figures. In 1969 the median per capita income of whites in New York State was \$3,956 a year. That of Puerto Ricans was only \$1,764 or 44.6 per cent of the level for whites. There is a similar gap in family incomes. In 1971, according to the article cited above, median yearly income of white families was \$10,672, while the median for Puerto Rican families was only \$6,185 or 58 per cent of that of white families.

We can add to this still another factor which heightens the economic difficulties of the Puerto Rican people in New York State. In 1969 the number of Puerto Rican women working was only 47 per cent of the corresponding number of Puerto Rican men. This is the lowest percentage for any group. In the Black community the figure was 86 per cent, and even in the white community, whose male workers are better off financially than either Black or Puerto Rican workers, the level was 61 per cent. The fact is that the majority of Puerto Rican women do not work and therefore a great number

of Puerto Rican families are dependent on only one income. Of course, much of this can be explained by customs, culture and male supremacy. But also important is the lack of educational opportunities and the persistent discrimination against women (and not only against Puerto Rican women) in education. The lack of adequate child care centers also hampers the ability of Puerto Rican women to work.

When women do work they earn much lower wages than men. The situation is further complicated by the fact that 27 per cent of Puerto Rican families are headed by women. In addition, unemployment rates for Puerto Rican women are especially high. In 1970 only about one-fourth of women heading Puerto Rican families had any work.

The above conditions explain why great numbers of Puerto Rican families receive full welfare benefits or welfare income supplements. If we couple the low wage in the Puerto Rican community with the high rate of unemployment, we can easily understand the crisis character of the economic status of Puerto Rican people. The unemployment rate, even according to the official figures, is almost twice the national average, and in Puerto Rican neighborhoods unemployment among youth can reach well above 30 per cent.

This explains why Puerto Ricans have been migrating back to Puerto Rico. But this reverse migration doesn't mean that conditions in Puerto Rico are any better. Puerto Rico itself suffers fantastically high unemployment. Even the official figures place it at 11 per cent, but unofficial estimates place it as high as 30 per cent. And as we have already noted, this is combined with higher living costs and a higher rate of inflation than in the United States, while wages are one-third of U.S. wages. The fact is that the migration from Puerto Rico is still greater than the migration to it.

The oppressive imperialist conditions imposed by the United States on Puerto Rico and the experiences of Puerto Ricans in the United States have led to a rising class consciousness and often revolutionary consciousness among the Puerto Rican people, especially among workers and youth. This increased consciousness has helped to build a strong independence movement in Puerto Rico. And there are many new forces calling for a socialist alternative there. A very significant development has been the increased growth of the independent Puerto Rican labor movement, in numbers, strength, influence and militancy. Similarly, in the United States this increased consciousness has had important repercussions in the areas of labor, political action, community control of schools and other institutions and developments in culture and the arts.

Discrimination in the Trade Unions

I turn now to some of the key problems of Puerto Ricans in the labor movement.

In the International Ladies Garment Workers Union we see the difficulties faced by the Puerto Rican workers. Often their only alternatives are unemployment or underemployment in unorganized sweatshops or "organized" sweatshops. The ILGWU is a union whose membership in the New York metropolitan area today is predominantly Black and Puerto Rican, and mostly women. Yet within the garment industry the white workers predominate in the more skilled crafts and higher-paying jobs—cutters, truck drivers, etc. Thus there is systematic discrimination against Puerto Ricans and Blacks in the industry. Poor jobs, poor working conditions and poor pay are their common situation.

The union is a class-collaborationist, racist organization. The leadership is overwhelmingly white, male and aged. The only Puerto Ricans on the staff are handpicked by this racist leadership to help push sellout contracts among the workers. They often serve also as an aid to the union leadership and the bosses in suppressing workers' grievances. These token union employees are used in addition to undermine democracy within the union structure, whether at meetings or during elections. Through crafty use of racism and bribery the lily-white leadership counts on solid support from confused and misled white workers at the same time that it uses tactics designed to divide and conquer the mass of Black and Puerto Rican membership.

Lack of Puerto Rican representation in leadership is a common problem in all unions. Bear in mind that there are no unions in which Puerto Ricans predominate as, for example, do the Chicanos in the Farm Workers Union. Yet some unions have benefited from the contributions and increased membership of Puerto Rican workers, for example Drug and Hospital Workers Local 1199 and District 65 of the Distributive Workers. Unlike the ILGWU, 1199 is a dynamic and progressive union in many ways—organizing the unorganized, improving working conditions and pay, and fighting for the settlement of workers' grievances. Recently 1199 succeeded in winning union recognition at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan, after having lost previous elections over a period of years. The union organizers clearly indicated that it was the militancy of the Black and Puerto Rican workers that finally brought victory. Yet even in 1199 there are no elected Puerto Rican officials, although there are some Puerto Rican business agents hired by the union.

Nationally we find an exclusionary and discriminatory pattern against Puerto Rico workers. The Economic Commission points to the exceptionally low representation of Puerto Ricans in the professional group (teachers, etc.) and their exceptionally high representation among factory workers. Thus, 37.7 percent of all Puerto Rican workers are employed in manufacturing as against 24.8 per cent of all white workers.

An indication of the status of Puerto Ricans in teaching is given by a recent study of the composition of the teaching staff at City College of New York. Of the 15,111 teachers employed in 1971, only 247 or less than 2 per cent were Puerto Rican. Of these, 211 were instructors or guest lecturers. There were only 5 associate professors, 4 professors, 2 department chairmen and 2 deans.

Spanish Americans lag far behind others in educational attainments. The Census shows that median years of schooling completed by persons 25 years of age and over averaged 9.6 for Spanish Americans compared with 12.1 for the total population. This comparatively low level of education has hampered many from qualifying for higher-paying jobs and has had a significant impact on family incomes. For Puerto Ricans the level is still lower, ranging from 8.0 years in Pennsylvania to 8.6 years in New York. On the other hand, Cubans in Florida averaged 11 years.

This difference is due to the fact that the Cubans came here already highly educated, having been part of the upper crust before the revolution. On the other hand the Puerto Ricans coming here tend to be poor, unskilled workers with little education, forced to migrate because of deplorable conditions at home. In addition, Cuban exiles have received special treatment in the United States all along and have been largely free of the discrimination and oppression suffered by other Spanish-speaking peoples, especially the Chicano and Puerto Rican peoples.

A Growing Base of Struggle

The Puerto Rican worker has faced tremendous difficulty in being able to fight in his behalf in the past. The majority have been employed in unorganized industries (agricultural, service). But more and more the situation is changing.

There has been substantial organization. The hospital, distributive and electrical workers have gained strength through increased membership and militancy in the new political climate of the sixties and seventies. The most important gain has been the growing numbers of Puerto Ricans in basic industry. The importance of this increase

should not be minimized. Working in basic industry provides greater economic means and stability for the Puerto Rican worker and his family and community. It also provides an opportunity for a greater voice because of the greater strength of the unions in these industries, as a result of which these workers tend to have more spare time in which to engage in struggle.

What do I mean by this? For example, the head of a Puerto Rican household working in the garment industry by day will often work at a second job in the evenings or on weekends to supplement the low wages on the primary job. This makes for a tired worker, with very little time for anything but rest. It is hard to involve such a worker and most often members of his or her family in political, community or shop struggles. This explains the charge of apathy often levelled by some Puerto Rican Left organizations.

But this situation is fast changing, thanks to the growing core of Puerto Rican workers in basic industry and the greater strength of the hospital, electrical and distributive industry unions. In addition the Puerto Rican workers have been uniting with other groups of workers, in particular with Black and rank-and-file caucuses to change conditions in all unions but especially in the more undemocratic, class collaborationist-led unions such as the notorious ILGWU. This has increased the strength of the Puerto Rican workers and has benefited the entire community.

This heightened strength, in unity with Black and other labor and progressive forces, has produced some small but meaningful changes for the Puerto Rican people in the United States. In New York City, for example, we see an increase in Puerto Rican enrollment at the university level, and those who enroll are working-class youth. We see greater participation and leadership in the schools and in student struggles. We note a significant increase in Puerto Rican representation in government at all levels, even though there is still a long way to go. We can even consider that it was the increased strength of the Puerto Rican people, aroused by the desire for improved conditions and representation, that allowed Puerto Rican-born Herman Badillo to make a serious bid for the mayoralty of New York. Despite his bourgeois background and other faults, Badillo, thanks to the pressures of the Puerto Rican people and the political climate in New York, was able to run strongly in the initial primaries.

These pressures force him to speak out on issues pertinent to the Puerto Rican, Black and labor communities. Whether one agrees with Badillo as a candidate, the fact that he seeks to take advantage of the opportunity is due to the strong desire of Puerto Ricans for represen-

tation and political power. The Puerto Rican voter is also conscious of the need to defeat the ultra-Right and to combat racism. We have witnessed such advanced voting patterns in Newark and Cleveland where the victorious Black mayoralty candidates Gibson and Stokes, respectively, were solidly supported by the Puerto Ricans. Similarly, in 1969 John Lindsay was supported for the mayoralty of New York against the reactionaries Marchi and Procaccino, and this despite the fact that Lindsay has not distinguished himself by acts benefiting Puerto Ricans in any great measure during his tenure in office.

Our Program

A united working class in alliance with the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and other oppressed minorities is a powerful force for progressive changes in this country and a bulwark against the forces of reaction. It is to the achievement of such unity that the Communist Party of the United States is dedicated.

Founded in 1919, the CPUSA has a proud history of leading the struggle for the organization and unity of Black and white, and for the advancement of the interests of the entire working class in this country. It has always been a party of the entire working class. In the Party's peak period in the thirties and forties it had large numbers of Puerto Rican members. With the advent of Browderism and later of McCarthyism it suffered serious losses in membership, especially among workers and oppressed minorities, where the ruling class aimed its sharpest attacks. Today the Party is again recruiting Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rican cadres play a role in leadership organs on national and district levels. The same is true of the Young Workers Liberation League.

The Communist Party's program for the advancement of Puerto Rican liberation and of the interests of the entire working class is one which, we are certain, will result in the Party's further growth in the Puerto Rican community. The main points of that program are as follows:

1. Greater education and propaganda on the national question, especially as it applies to Puerto Ricans: their struggle for national independence in Puerto Rico and their struggle as an oppressed minority in the United States for full equality and liberation.
2. Teaching of Puerto Rican history and culture to all U.S. people; inclusion in public school curriculums.
3. Organization of the unorganized—of special importance today in migrant farm areas on the East Coast.

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Features of the Working-Class Movement

The most striking feature of the working-class movement in our country today is the dramatic intensification of the class struggle which is unfolding in every section of basic industry—in the coal mines, auto plants and steel mills, the electrical, rubber, textile and other industries. There is also the growing identification of white-collar and professional workers with trade union organization. The hard-fought teachers' strikes in Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and other cities are also an important indication of widespread class warfare.

Rising Militancy

This moment is marked by a new high level of militancy among workers, particularly among young workers, among Black, Brown, white, among male and female. It is vividly demonstrated in the tens of thousands of rank-and-file job actions in the form of strikes, slow-downs, mass sick calls or what have you. They are taking place in the face of Nixon's "New Economic Policy," of federal and state anti-strike laws, of no-strike clauses in contract agreements, and of a top trade union leadership whose major preoccupation is to force the members to "cool it."

Militancy is often expressed by refusal to recognize long-standing company rules and regulations. Young workers especially won't jump when they see the boss coming and don't hesitate a minute in telling him where to get off. They see nothing positive in grinding day-to-day toil at the expense of their energy and health. Many have before them the graphic example of the deadly effects of work in the mines, mills and factories on the health and lifespan of their fathers, mothers and often their grandparents.

The "absenteeism" that bosses complain about so bitterly is an expression of outrage at working conditions on a sped-up assembly line, a gaseous coke plant, a dust-ridden mine, a textile mill with its screaming machinery, heat, dust, and killing work loads. Young workers have no feeling of gratitude to the corporations that force such conditions upon them. They see nothing positive in a daily life of grinding toil. I recently talked with a young miner, a Vietnam veteran, who had been suspended for "laying off." An older miner was talking to him about the need to hold his job. "Look at me,"

he said. "I've been in the mines twenty years and never lost a day." The answer was: "And what has it got you? Black lung and a beat-up house." Or take the young assembly line auto worker who was called before the company for missing work. To the question, "Why do you always work a four-day week?" his answer was: "Because I can't live on three." Such incidents can be multiplied by the tens of thousands. True, these are anarchistic actions. But they are another expression of the militant, angry mood of a great many young workers today.

With this militancy, there is a definable process of radicalization taking place, a growing challenge to things as they are, a questioning, a search for new solutions. The old defense of capitalism as the "best of all systems" is seldom if ever heard on the plant floor or in the union hall, except from some top union bureaucrats or from hucksters like Hubert Humphrey who frequently infest trade union conventions.

Socialism is now a legitimate question for discussion. The problem is the widespread confusion as to what it is, how it works. This is magnified by the plethora of ultra-Left literature that is finding its way into the plants, very often with the aid of the company and of the same police who try to block distribution of the *Daily World*.

Workers are asking many questions about socialism. "Will it really work?" "Isn't it just an idealistic illusion?" "You can't change human nature." "How about workers in Communist countries? Don't we have it better than they?" At the same time, there is an almost grudging, distorted recognition of the great gains being made by workers under socialism: absence of unemployment, adequate medical care, educational opportunities, low rents and low taxes. Religion is no longer able to present Communism as a bugaboo. In fact, religious participation among workers is at a new low level even though religious concepts and habits of thought retain a strong influence. There is not yet a mass turn to scientific socialism—to Marxism-Leninism. But the objective conditions for this historic development are rapidly ripening.

The intensification of the class struggle is directly related to the disastrous decline in the living standards and the quality of life of working people. Previous reports at this conference have clearly demonstrated not only a relative but an absolute decline in the purchasing power of workers due to frozen wages and the huge increase in the cost of the basic necessities of life—the things workers just can't do without. The result is in effect a wage cut.

It is not like the old days; the ruling class is too clever for that. When the unions were weak or non-existent, a notice on the mine door or the factory bulletin board announced a reduction in pay. The trick now is to raise prices and freeze wages in order to achieve the same results—higher profits.

Equally important as a source of this new militancy is the brutal speedup drive that has been intensified under such slogans as "Make America Competitive." This campaign is nationwide in character, more comprehensive than anything that ever preceeded it. It is engineered by the so-called "Productivity Committee" which Richard Nixon established under the Economic Stabilization Act handed to him by Congressional liberals on a silver platter. Like the vicious wage freeze it, too, has one objective—fatter profits for the corporations.

The Rank-and-File Movements

The most dramatic, the most powerful expression of the intensification of the class struggle has been the explosion of rank-and-file movements of workers over every possible issue and on every possible level. A very important part of this development is the Black Caucus movement emanating from the special problems of Black and other minority workers due to company racism at the point of production and to the failure of trade union leaders to deal with it adequately, or to their actual partnership in crime with the companies, as in the building trades.

Most of these movements are sparked by younger workers, but not always. Keep in mind that the historic revolt of rank-and-file miners was begun by older miners, most of whom had already been sickened by Black Lung. Young miners joined in with a will, and many are now coming into positions of union leadership. The rank-and-file struggles in the mines have been the most successful to date, ousting a union leadership that epitomized corruption and class collaboration. They have inspired confidence in rank-and-file workers of all industries. Steel workers look to the miner's experience in their determined efforts to reverse the sell-out of their right to strike by steel union president I. W. Abel.

Attempting to destroy or curtail these militant rank-and-file movements has been the major preoccupation of the corporations, the government and, with very rare exceptions, top union leaders who resent the fact that their comfortable policies of sell-out wheeling and dealing are being challenged in the ranks. It was inability to stem this grass-roots upsurge by other means that forced Nixon

to impose the wage freeze and to use the anti-labor racist, Connolly, to enforce it with the traitorous aid of the dominant section of top trade-union leadership. This is the only country in the world where union leaders dared commit such a crime against their members.

The building of rank-and-file movements is absolutely essential to turning the trade unions back into class-struggle instruments of the working people of this country. There is no other path. This means strengthening the rank-and-file movements in the mines, not eliminating it now that Boyle and his gang are being ousted. It means all-out support to the rank-and-file movement in steel, that is mounting a growing challenge to Abel's sell-out policies. In auto, maritime, rubber, textile, renewed efforts are needed to build rank-and-file groups based mainly on the production workers and geared to a conscious struggle against racism and for Black-white unity. Such rank-and-file coordinating bodies as the Chicago-based Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy (T.U.A.D.) merit maximum support. T.U.A.D. has already proven its worth in spite of the inevitable attacks and problems such an organization faces. The progressive movement has a responsibility in helping to extend this organization to every industrial area in this country.

Political Independence

Another important aspect of the class struggle is the resistance to the naked intervention of the federal government on the side of the monopolies in company-union relations, as expressed in the wage freeze, the productivity drive, the abrogation of contracts, and open interference in contract negotiations. The use of injunctions surpasses even the union-busting 1920's, which brought the Norris-LaGuardia act of 1931, forbidding the use of the courts to break strikes, but now gutted by arbitrary decisions of the Nixonized Supreme Court. Defiance of these strike-breaking injunctions by teachers, postal workers and unionists in other industries is another indication of the growing militancy noted earlier.

Related to this is the new level of political independence now clearly definable in the ranks of labor and even among sections of the trade union leadership. The "Watergate horrors" have helped many workers see through the corruption of the two-party system of big business. The search for a viable alternative has been speeded up. More and more workers are rejecting candidates put forward by both the Democratic and Republican parties and are demanding something better to vote for.

The serious split that surfaced in the AFL-CIO over Meany's active efforts on behalf of Nixon's re-election has been further aggravated by the Watergate revelations and the escalated deterioration of working-class living standards under Administration policies. Communists and other progressives have both the opportunity and responsibility to utilize the present situation to help further the emergence of a mass people's party based on at least sections of the trade union movement. This is the only remaining capitalist country where labor is forced to rely on mass political parties controlled by the monopolies—where labor does not have a political party it can call its own. The need for such a party is obvious. It will be not a "party of socialism," but a "party of reform." It will not solve the problems workers face under capitalism, but it should be seen as a necessary part of the historical process, facilitating the transition to socialism. The fight for independent labor candidates, for rank-and-file organizations working for labor's independence, is very much on the agenda.

Monopoly's Ideological Drive

The ruling class has launched an intensive ideological campaign for the purpose of putting over the wage freeze and the speedup drive. Incorporated in it is the threat that if workers don't go easy on wage demands and if they don't put out more work, plants are going to shut down due to what is vaguely described as "foreign imports." In spite of the willing assistance of labor fakers like I. W. Able in steel, the speedup drive has gone over, as the saying goes, "like a lead balloon." Workers have quickly seen through the trickery used in the effort to put it over.

With the question of wages, it is another story. The massive propaganda campaign by the monopolies to convince workers that wages are responsible for inflation has created widespread confusion. The fact that top trade union leadership capitulated instead of fighting has only added to the problem. Many workers have fallen for the idea that wage increases are really responsible for high prices. Of course, it's the other fellow's wages that are blame, since very few working-class families make enough to live on now and find they are unable to maintain even the standards they do have. (In such industries as auto, coal mining, steel and trucking they depend considerably on overtime to make ends meet.)

Corporate spokesmen and their kept press constantly blame even the most outrageous price increases on wage rises.

Inevitably, a price increase will follow even the slimmest of wage

increases. A worker will often say, "I know I'm not getting enough to live on now, but every time I get a wage increase, prices and taxes take a jump. I can buy less now than when I got my last raise."

Class-collaborationist union officials quickly come to the rescue with proposals for "non-inflationary" wage increases and so-called non-taxable fringe benefits. This sell-out policy, coupled with open threats from the Nixon Administration and the arrogance of the monopolies, is resulting in totally inadequate contract agreements in negotiations involving millions of workers in 1973. And the monopolies are openly gloating over it.

But in spite of the confusion and repression, it is a fact that higher wages are needed to meet higher prices. Otherwise, living standards sharply decline, as they are now doing. Workers are in no mood to accept this without a struggle. Inevitably, the demand for higher wages, contract or no contract, will be picked up by the rank and file and forced into the collective bargaining arena. Meany, Abel, Fitzsimmons and other top union bureaucrats, who are helping make the wage freeze work, know this. Even in their presently insulated positions they are beginning to feel the hot breath of the rank and file on their necks and fear what it can mean to their fat jobs and salaries. At the same time, Marxist-Leninists must do a much better job of combatting the ideological falsifications of the ruling class on this question.

The Fight Against Racism

Racism, along with anti-Communism, continues to be the most dangerous anti-working class ideological weapon in the hands of the monopolies. It remains a serious problem in the ranks of white workers. At the same time, it would be a serious mistake to overlook the positive impact the militant rank-and-file movements, and especially the Black Caucuses, have had.

Rank-and-file movements of struggle inevitably generate a pressure for working-class unity. The problem is that when they are of a spontaneous, short-lived nature this unity is not very deep or lasting. Nevertheless the overall impact of the intensified class struggle creates new possibilities for building unity and if these are not utilized the struggle suffers.

The Black Caucus movement has had a very positive effect on the struggle against racism. There are a number of examples of Black Caucuses turning into militant Black-white caucuses under Black leadership. There has been a measurable increase in the number

of Black workers elected to union office in cases where the members are white.

But in spite of these gains the basic problem remains. White workers have not yet taken up the struggle against racism in a mass way in their own class interests. Until this happens the unity of the working class is in constant peril.

Discrimination on the job and in the unions continues at shamefully high levels. The number of Black and other minority union leaders remains far below what it should be. The teamsters, building trades, electrical, steel and other important unions have no Black members in policy-making positions.

The strong tendency of white workers to blame Black and other minority workers for growing social problems is a particularly virulent manifestation of racism, fueled by the Nixon Administration. Taxes are high because the money goes to welfare. Poor schools and the declining quality of public education are caused by integration. Housing problems and deterioration of urban life are the result of Blacks moving in. So it is said. White workers who unite with their Black brothers and sisters in militant rank-and-file job actions then turn and blame "you people" for such social problems as the above. This, of course, only weakens working-class unity.

Unfortunately the struggle against male supremacy and discrimination against women is at a very unsatisfactory stage. The proof of the pudding is in the very low wages of women workers, especially Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican women. There are very few women at the top levels of union leadership—none on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. At lower levels there have been some breakthroughs, but these have been very few. The Communications Workers is one positive example. In one industry after another, women workers are referred to as girls, regardless of age, and that goes for white-collar as well as factory workers.

Much of the confusion over the question of the "aristocracy of labor" injected by Marcuse and other petty-bourgeois radicals has been pretty well cleared up by life itself. It is rather difficult these days to put auto and steel workers in that category. Workers who can be defined as part of the "aristocracy of labor"—and I would define them as those who can write their own ticket—have always been small in number and are growing even smaller (unless we want to put the trade union officialdom in that category).

However, a serious problem does exist, and that is the problem of narrow craft unionism which occurs among skilled workers, care-

fully instilled in them during lengthy apprentice training periods. It is particularly damaging because of its influence within the AFL-CIO, which is controlled by the craft union leaders, and it provides Meany with his reactionary base. It is a selfish, racist trend within the trade union movement—a go-it-alone unionism epitomized by Meany's failure to lead any coordinated drive to organize the unorganized.

On the other hand, we should take positive note of the growing tendency toward joint struggle in the trade union movement. A prominent example is that of the 14 unions involved in joint negotiations with General Electric and Westinghouse. Other examples are the boycotts of lettuce and of Farah and Shell products. There is also the amalgamation of unions in similar fields, such as the formation of the United Transportation Union in railroad. Of course, I do not include in this the efforts of the Teamsters, the steel union and others to gobble up workers regardless of category. I also believe the policy of the United Electrical Workers of independence and cooperation is a sound one for this period, even though they could very easily go into the IUE or the UAW.

We should also note as a positive development the widespread opposition to the Indochina war in the ranks of the working class—the highest percentage opposed to a war in our history. There is a growing realization among workers that war does not mean prosperity.

Corruption and Bankruptcy

Without fear of contradiction we can say that the corruption and bankruptcy of the dominant section of the top trade union officialdom has gone beyond all past bounds. With a few honorable exceptions, class-collaborationism, racism, corruption, gangsterism and anti-Communism are rampant in the top levels of the AFL-CIO and of such independent unions as the Teamsters. And reformist trade union leaders who do not so openly display these features have proven equally bankrupt in meeting the new problems workers face.

This is the only capitalist country in which the top union leadership went along with a wage freeze without fighting it. This is the only country in which organized labor works within bourgeois political parties. Not only the AFL-CIO International Department but the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the UAW and numerous other unions have worked with the CIA in past years. Meany and his gang are in Watergate up to their necks. We can start

with Meany's Labor Day feast with Nixon in 1970. Then there was the meeting with Nixon at AFL-CIO headquarters where the "hard-hat" attack on peace advocates in New York was planned under the leadership of Pete Brennan, now Nixon's Labor Secretary. There were Meany's secret meetings with some of the top Watergate criminals and the big contributions of the Teamsters and Seafarers unions to the Committee to Re-elect the President.

To all this we can add Abel's sellout in steel and Woodcock's playing down the need for a wage increase and coming up with proposals for a "harmony clause" which would say that what helps the auto magnates help the UAW and *vice versa*. With few exceptions (UE, ILWU, the Distributive Workers, Local 1199 and several others) trade union officials are living off the fat of the land with enormous salaries and almost unlimited expense accounts, with big pensions and what have you, paid from the union dues of their members. This corruption is not confined to the top but penetrates to lower levels, particularly in the craft unions. In New York City the Painters union has 21 business agents for 4,000 members. Each of them receive wages and expenses of more than \$360 a week.

Does this make unions part of the establishment, part of the ruling-class apparatus? I think any such idea must be emphatically rejected. In spite of the decay of the top leadership, the trade unions remain instruments of the working class in its struggle against exploitation and for a better life.

The Rank-and-File Upsurge

It is true that the virtual destruction of the Left in the trade union movement during the cold war created the conditions for class-collaborationist leadership and bureaucratic control. There is a great need for the rank and file to smash through and regain control of their unions, to turn them into militant, class-struggle instruments of the working class. I believe that this process is now taking place before our very eyes and that we have the responsibility of helping it along. Not that we will then have revolutionary unions; that will only happen in a revolutionary situation. But we *will* have fighting unions.

We must see what is happening in the ranks of the working class as a result of the intensification of the class struggle if we would properly project an estimate of the future. Rank-and-file movements that sprang up spontaneously over the issues of speedup, dangerous and deadly working conditions, sellout contract settle-

ments, racism are beginning to consolidate and to have a growing impact in the trade unions. Look at the rank-and-file movement among the coal miners—a movement that started with two or three miners protesting the existing conditions in scattered areas in the coal fields. An organized rank-and-file movement in steel is already responsible for one big local after another repudiating Abel's sellout, often by unanimous votes. In auto rank-and-file pressure broke through the tight controls the UAW leadership tried to impose on contract negotiations—to keep them, as Woodcock said, within "reasonable bounds." There is also the wave of anti-speedup strikes in General Motors sparked by rank-and-file production workers.

The rank and file in the U.S. trade unions is on the move, just as it is on the move in Britain, France, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, South America and even in Spain, where Franco is forced to jail its leaders. To repeat, in themselves the rank-and-file movements in this country are not revolutionary. But their challenge to *status quo* unionism is an important reflection of the deep crisis of U.S. imperialism. It is the forerunner, the weathervane pointing toward the eventual development of a revolutionary situation in our country leading to the emergence of socialism.

Needless to say, none of this is going to happen without the leadership of the Communist Party. Even the best of rank-and-file movements that spring up spontaneously have limited staying power. If they are to bring about the transformation of which they are capable, the participation of class-conscious Marxist-Leninists is necessary. The building of the Communist Party and the building of the rank-and-file movements go hand in hand. One complements the other.

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interests on the other. There is no conflict of interests because the enemy is the same and we Communists are as interested as you are in winning concessions.

In fact it is to your best self interest and to the best interests of the struggle for immediate concessions that we have a strong Communist Party. You will never find a more loyal group of class fighters than the Communists. We bring into the struggle staunch fighters, but we also bring with us a science, a revolutionary science, Marxism-Leninism. It is a guide to victorious struggles. It is for these reasons that the monopoly corporations and their spokesmen continue to red-bait, continue to use Hitler's big lies against Communists. They do so to disunite the working class; a strong Communist Party is essential to the fight for its unity.

The Struggle for Working-Class Unity

Other reporters have presented very fine reports on the working class and so my assignment is to talk about problems and weaknesses.

Our attitude as Marxists and Communists, our approach to the problems of society and to the working class is not that of Plekhanov's doctor. He was an indignant doctor. Plekhanov said this doctor studied carefully and scientifically all the diseases and the ills of the patient. He kept exact charts and records of all the illnesses and problems. And then he would make indignant statements about the sicknesses. He would rant and rave about these awful ills. But he never did anything about them. He was morally indignant, but never did anything about curing them.

The Sickness of Capitalism

That is not our relationship to social problems or to the class struggle. We want scientific diagnoses. We want to find out what the ills are. But our purpose—our only purpose—is to be able to do something about them.

For instance, the purpose of this conference is not to write a book, although I understand that may happen. We do not acquire knowledge for the pleasure of knowing. Our studies have a clear purpose, and that is to better equip ourselves to lead our class in struggle. And of course, the story of Plekhanov's doctor does not apply to us and does not apply to the working class, because it is not the working class that is sick. It is capitalism that is sick. And speaking about Watergate, the smell of Watergate is the smell of a terminal case. It is the odor of a system in decay.

But we have a humanitarian approach to capitalism. It suffers from a terminal condition, so "why prolong it?" It's going to die anyway, so why prolong its suffering.

I'm not going to speak too much about it but there are some very important lessons in the Watergate affair. We will have to study it very carefully and deeply. What appears in the headlines is not the story of Watergate.

The Watergate explosion is exposing the class roots of the capitalist state. Masses can see state-monopoly capitalism, the relations between state and monopoly, much clearer. There has developed a police state structure, an invisible force beyond Congress, beyond the Cabinet. There are great pressures for such a stage of development of monopoly capitalism. It's not accidental. The pressures for a police-state, fascist development come from the very processes of

capitalist development. And this exposes monopoly capital as the root evil of all political developments, as a decaying, inhuman, corrupt, degenerate, reactionary, racist class. In the coming period, we will have to go into that much deeper.

Capitalism has lost its dominant position in world affairs. The capitalists as a class have lost their top-dog position. Capitalism has lost its dominant position militarily and it has lost it economically. And with that a very important development is taking place—possibly the most important of this era. In the minds of masses, capitalism has lost its image as representing that which is best for all of society. A class can maintain its dominant position if it can hold on to the image that it alone represents the good in society, that it represents the best interests of all of society. Capitalism has been able to do that for over 100 years. So, it's important that it has not just lost its dominant world position as a class, economically and militarily, but that it has lost that status in the minds of millions of people. Most likely history will record this shift in mass patterns of thought as the most important development of this whole period.

In the past, the achievements of society were always identified with capitalism. What was positive was seen as the result of capitalism, of private enterprise. But the mass mind does not now identify capitalism with the achievements of society.

This is a historic ideological transition. It reflects the economic and military transition, but it goes further: this is a great ideological transition in mass thought. Capitalism is not now identified with the positive achievements of society. In fact, it is now identified with the negative features, the roadblocks, the obstacles, the decay. It is identified with the rotten part of society.

The Liberating Class

The other side of this shift in the mass thought is the identification of the positive achievements of society with a new class—with the working class. As capitalism loses its former image, the working class emerges as the class that is the conveyor of everything positive in society. And more and more that's the ideological trend that is taking place. There is an increasing identification of the achievements of society with socialism. That is a most significant shift—most significant because it opens up the mass mind to new ideas, new concepts. What kind of ideas? Working-class, socialist ideas. This shift gives the process of radicalization a solid ideological base.

You don't have to ponder too deeply to realize that this must be reflected in our work as Marxists, as Communists. It must mold our approach to struggle. It must give us a greater boldness in the

projection of new ideas and thoughts. We have to take full advantage of this tremendous mass shift.

If you have not read *The Monist View of History* by George Plekhanov, you must. I had forgotten what a great, exciting writer Plekhanov was. One can understand why Lenin said, "If you want to be a real Communist, you have to read Plekhanov." Plekhanov quotes Marx on the historic role of classes. This quotation makes such an impression now because Marx is talking about today and about the transition in the mass mind. He said:

No class in civil society can play this part [the dominant role] unless it calls forth a phase of enthusiasm in its own ranks and those of the masses: a phase when it fraternizes and intermingles with society in general, is identified with society, is felt and recognized to be the *universal representative* of society, and when its own demands and rights are really the demands and rights of society itself, and it is in truth the social head and the social heart. Only in the name of society and its rights in general can a particular class vindicate its general domination. The position of liberator cannot be taken by storm, simply through revolutionary energy and intellectual self-confidence. If the emancipation of a particular class is to be identified with the revolution of a people, if one social class is treated as the whole social order, then, on the other hand, all the deficiencies of society must be concentrated in another class; a definite class must be the universal stumbling block, the embodiment of universal fetters. . . . If one class is to be the liberating class par excellence, then another class must contrariwise be the obvious subjugator. (*Contribution to the Hegelian Philosophy of Law*, Introduction, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, 1844. Quoted in *The Monist View of History*, International Publishers, New York, 1972, p. 175.)

This is a beautiful thought that applies to today's reality. It is a shift that is taking place in class relations on a world scale, and it is taking place here in the United States.

This mass shift is a process which takes place step by step. It's not something that comes out of the blue; it is a step-by-step process. First there is the process of masses beginning to have questions about capitalism, questions about its ability to rule and continue as of old. Then there is disillusionment, dropping the illusions that capitalism is everything positive. And finally there is the conviction that capitalism cannot continue and that it is a negative force. That process is now going on. And in that process there is the beginning of seeing the working class as the replacement, as the class that will lead society to the next higher stages.

There's no question that the Watergate explosion has given this

process a great push. It has shown the negative side of capitalism and the positive nature of the working class. And, as Marx says, in the minds of masses the deficiencies, the usual stumbling blocks, the universal fetters, are related to monopoly capitalism. This is an important factor in the shift in the balance of world forces.

This overall shift, ideologically, is increasingly an obstacle to anti-Communism. Anti-Communism is still a difficult problem, but increasingly this mass shift is an obstacle to it, and to anti-Sovietism as an ideological current. This shift is a factor in the reactions to the coming visit of Comrade Leonid Brezhnev on June 19. There are two reactions to Brezhnev's visit that relate to this question, expressed in editorials in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. They are different but they are both troubled with the same problem. It's an unusual thing for leading spokesmen of capitalism to be troubled about this kind of a problem.

What they are concerned about is that the working class, the socialist spokesman, will be able to deal from a position of strength. The *Times* comes to the conclusion: "Please postpone or cancel the visit." The *Wall Street Journal* says: "Very well, let it take place, but beware. Watch this man. He's going to take an arm and a leg. He's dealing from a position of strength."

Until a few years ago it was the spokesmen for capitalism who spoke from a position of strength. As for the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* (I'm sure they're not fully aware of it) this ideological shift is affecting their thinking.

That's the first thought I want to leave with you: the changing image of the two classes, the two systems, that is taking place in the mass mind the world over, including in the United States.

The Struggle for Unity

I turn now to the struggle for the unity of the working class. This is not an academic matter. It is not an abstract, ideal condition we strive for. It is not a matter of a slogan "let's unite," or an appeal, "please unite." During a turbulent period in the history of the UAW a turbulent convention took place. Nobody was paying attention to anybody else. There were caucuses and factionalism and the convention was totally out of control. Then the president stepped up to the microphone. He said, "Please, please, I'm your president. Listen to me. Let's have unity." But of course nobody paid any attention to him. It was as if he wasn't there at all. So, the question of unity cannot rest on abstract pleas.

The reason is that everybody is for unity. As a matter of fact, unity is the smokescreen for class collaboration. Meany pleaded for unity

behind his support for Nixon in the 1972 election campaign. It was an appeal: "Don't split the trade union movement." Such a plea for unity is a smokescreen for concealment of opportunism. I could relate to you for days and days examples of how the plea for unity is used as a cloak for opportunism. For instance some trade union leaders asked the Left members of rank-and-file groups in the last elections not to push for condemnation of Nixon because it would "split the ranks." This is a very common practice. It is all too common among Left forces, who refuse to take up the struggle against racism because "it would split the ranks." It's obvious that this is used to conceal racism and opportunism, which always go hand in hand.

Most crimes of opportunism are committed in the name of great ideals and great causes, in the name of "unity" and in the name of the "long range goals of the working class." Most opportunism is covered over by such lofty expressions. Hence the first step in the struggle for working-class unity is to attack its misuse by opportunists and reactionary elements, to do so openly and not be afraid to be called a "splitter" when the cause is right. That's a necessary element in struggle. Because to support reaction and opportunism is not a way to struggle for unity; it is submission. We must destroy such concepts of "unity." We must conduct a campaign within the working-class movement against such false concepts.

The struggle for unity is not a matter of peaceful coexistence with such ideas. Unity is a matter of struggle. Struggle for unity is an important factor in the class struggle, and whether it is always achieved or not is not the most important question. The struggle for it is an important tactical question, for in that process, political development takes place, ideological development takes place. It must be a constant feature of our work.

The struggle for unity is the weapon of the class struggle. It is a central weapon. That is how it must be used. On that basis one must ask what are the present obstacles to working-class unity in the United States. "Truth is concrete" is a good Leninist precept. And so in a Leninist sense, in a concrete sense, what are the obstacles to working class unity in the United States?

Class Consciousness: Basis of Unity

In first place I would put the lack of class consciousness. For class consciousness is the glue, the adhesive, the only solid basis for working class unity. There can be unity based on other concepts but it will have no solid foundation. Only class consciousness is the solid rock foundation for a united working class. Without it, all other concepts rest on quicksand. Other concepts may take hold, but they will

not be on solid ground. Class consciousness is what gives the struggle for unity direction and purpose.

It is also the rock-bottom foundation for militancy. Militancy in the working-class movement must be based on class consciousness. Then it will be on solid ground. Class consciousness is the only solid basis for working-class political action. It is the only solid basis for the development of socialist consciousness.

Thus the key question is class consciousness.

It is the necessary foundation for the struggle against all enemy class ideologies. It is the necessary foundation for the struggle against class-collaborationist ideas. It is impossible to fight effectively against such ideas, against the betrayal of the Meanys and Lovestones, without the development of class consciousness in the ranks of the workers.

It is the only solid basis for the struggle against racism. It is the only solid foundation in the working-class movement on which one can build the struggle against the influences of racism and chauvinism. It is a most key element in this whole area of struggle. We must do much more to drive home this point.

A unique feature of the working class of the U.S.—and here again truth is concrete—is that it is white, it is Black, it is Puerto Rican, it is Chicano, it is Asian, it is Indian. That's a unique feature of our working class.

The class consciousness of our workers must include awareness of this unique feature. The class consciousness of white workers must include awareness of the racist oppression of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian and Asian peoples in the United States and the racist discrimination against their class brothers that flows from this over-all racist oppression. In this sense class consciousness is also concrete. It grows by reflection on concrete reality.

Thus, opportunism in the struggle against the influences of racism is not only an accommodation to racism; it becomes an obstacle to the growth of class consciousness.

There are two other features that are unique. One is the large number of women who are part of the working class. The other is the great number of young people who now work in industry.

Our working class cannot be fully class conscious unless it understands these unique features. It cannot develop its class consciousness in depth without grasping them. But above all else it cannot develop class consciousness unless it understands that racism is the driving wedge that splits class unity, that it is the wedge the ruling class uses to split the ranks of the trade unions. And therefore we cannot have solid, lasting working-class unity unless we get the working

class to understand these unique features.

This is not a simple matter. Very often, inadvertently, what even Communists have in mind when speaking of the working class is *white workers*.

In other words, class consciousness means to be conscious of the concrete self of the workers as a class. That is the critical ideological element that we have to inject into the class struggle. And that is the only basis for the development of socialist consciousness. It cannot be built without class consciousness as a foundation.

Let me say that this is of special significance for us Communists. It is a law of political development that we cannot recruit new members into the Communist Party and even more that we cannot hold these new members if their convictions are not rooted in class consciousness. Recruiting on the basis of emotionalism will not do it.

I say this because people join the Party for other reasons. And these are good reasons. But they are secondary to class reasons. Therefore some drop out, especially at the sight of the first storm clouds. Emotions come and go, secondary influences fluctuate; class consciousness is the stable influence.

Our Role in Building Class Consciousness

I have dealt with the subject of class consciousness at length because it raises a most serious question. If the development of class consciousness is so decisive, how is it that we do so little about it? I think that's a serious question, not only for Communists but for anybody who is serious about the class struggle, about the working-class movement. I think you'll agree that we do not carry on a continuous struggle to raise the class consciousness of the working class. What is the reason for this weakness?

Is it because we believe that class consciousness is something that grows spontaneously? Is that why we do so little about it? There is, it is true, an element of spontaneous growth in class consciousness. But it is a limited, trial and error process.

However, I don't think that regarding it as a spontaneous process is the main reason we do not in a planned way do more about developing class consciousness. There is a deeper root of this weakness, and that is the lack of a deeper understanding of the class essence of capitalism, of the centrality of the class struggle and the historic role of the working class. That's where the roots of the weakness are. If there were a deeper understanding of this basic phenomenon, we would do more about developing class consciousness.

It is not only that we don't do enough about it. There is actually a downgrading of the working class and the class struggle. The class

question is ignored. It is surprising where that appears, including in the work of Communists. Comrades will speak and write about everything under the sun and say nothing about the working class, forgetting that there is such a class. There is snobbishness towards the working class. This is a basic weakness because if one does not understand the class question, neither does one understand the need to develop class consciousness.

I don't think there is a big problem in getting "agreement" here that the working class and the class struggle are key questions. The real question is how this will be translated into everyday activity. Once there is theoretical agreement, will it become a part of your life? That's the real test and that's where I think we have some weakness.

What is our role in developing class consciousness? It is consciously to use the everyday experiences of workers to help them see these as *class* experiences. It is to help make every worker aware that his problems are problems of his class, not just his individual problems. That is where the development of class consciousness starts. It's an everyday thing. And if it doesn't happen every day, that's where the weakness also starts.

This, for instance, is our task in the Watergate explosion. It is to use that explosion to develop class consciousness, to use it over and over again, to keep digging and digging for the class roots. That is our task, to use the events of the day, the daily experiences of struggle to develop a class-conscious working class.

Let me add that it is necessary to strive to develop class consciousness among all workers in all sectors of the working class, without exception. I want to emphasize that. Militancy is not necessarily class consciousness. There's a lot of militancy that doesn't necessarily arise from class consciousness. To say that a militant action is proof of class consciousness can lead to confusion because it isn't necessarily so. Even rebelliousness is not necessarily class consciousness. Class consciousness is a higher level of ideological development, one that it is absolutely necessary to strive for. Class-conscious workers are militant, but not all militant workers are class-conscious. Only when we understand this dialectical truth will we become fully conscious of the need to work in a manner that will help working people become conscious of themselves as a class. Only then will we be fully effective as fighters for class unity.

That is one area of concrete truths about our problems and weaknesses.

We Communists have a dialectical approach to all problems. We view questions in a rounded out manner. I have placed great emphasis

on the need to help workers become class-conscious and stressed that this is a solid base for working-class unity. But this does not mean we will appeal to and unite with only class-conscious workers. This would lead to sectarianism and to isolation from the millions of workers who are not conscious of being members of a class. Such workers are active, militant members of trade unions. The struggles around immediate daily issues involve workers who are not class-conscious. Therefore, when we emphasize the need to help workers become class-conscious, it does not and cannot mean our isolation from or disregard of these masses of workers. It is in the struggle for class unity among such workers that they will become class-conscious. This is also a concrete truth.

Policies of Betrayal

Another concrete truth in the struggle for working-class unity is that there can be no unity around the Meany-Lovestone policies. Nor can steelworkers unite around Abel's sellout policies. There can be no working-class unity around such policies. It would be like uniting with one's hangman to unite with Abel and Meany and Lovestone.

This applies to both domestic and foreign policies. The Meany-Abel policies are policies of subordination, of submission, of betrayal of the working class. They have long been standing on the iceberg of the cold war. Now that the iceberg is thawing they are delirious; they are acting like one who is drowning and is about to go down for the third time. Listen to this bughouse logic, in a statement of the AFL-CIO Executive Council on May 9, 1973: "The West should not grant the Soviet Union any economic concessions without receiving in return political concessions, like halting support of *Hanoi's* aggression in Indochina and *Arab war preparations* and *guerrilla activity* against Israel—and granting the German people the right of self-determination." (Emphasis added.) How can one describe such grovelling insanity? Trade union unity can be built only by rejecting this lunacy.

It is impossible to unite labor around the policies of the AFL-CIO. The struggle against such policies is a key element in the struggle for unity. There is a new element in this picture to which we must give new attention, namely that the domestic and foreign self-interests of the working class have come closer together. There has always been a connection, but it has not been clear enough. The domestic and international policies of imperialism are two sides of one policy. In this period, U.S. monopoly capitalism has been forced to give up a 50-year-old policy of blockading world socialism. But it has not given up everywhere. It continues its policy of blockade and aggression

against Cuba. But because they have given it up as an over-all policy, Meany has been left holding the discarded cold-war bag. They've given up but Meany is holding on. He continues to speak out for the cold war policy. Lovestone whispers in his ear and old George repeats what Lovestone whispers in his speeches.

He is trying to hold on to the Nixon Watergate bag, too. But he was forced to drop it in one speech. The inside story is that at the last meeting of the AFL-CIO, the top leadership at first refused to drop it. There were such pressures, however, that he had to call a press conference and make some statements against Watergate—and against Nixon. He said, "Let the truth come out." And he added, "We could live with it." Why not—he *has* lived with it. There is nothing too reactionary or corrupt for groveling George.

What has come into focus is that the cold-war bag is in sharp contradiction to the self-interest of the working class. This has always been true but now it stands out in sharp relief. The cold-war policies are anti-working class policies. And that's why the question of how the trade unions react to trade with the socialist countries is a question that needs some new attention. Trade means jobs, world peace. It has become more difficult for the Meany's to continue their cold-war policies.

It seems obvious that at this moment there is a need for bold new initiatives in the struggle to end the dominance of Meany and Lovestone in the AFL-CIO. It is clear that Watergate helps in this situation also. It is a struggle to end the policies of class collaboration and racism in the trade union movement. It is a struggle for unity.

Building the Rank-and-File Movements

The crisis of U.S. capitalism, Watergate, inflation, the wage freeze—these present new possibilities to change the nature of the whole trade union movement. We have a new opportunity to burn out the old policies and make class-struggle organizations out of the trade unions. The rank-and-file movements are moving in that direction. And this is another of the concrete truths. This can be accomplished only through organizing movements of the rank and file. There is no other way. It will never come about as a result of appeals to Meany or others in the leadership. The organization of rank-and-file movements is the only way the trade union movement can be reorganized and redirected. Therefore, the path to working-class unity, to trade union unity is the organization of active rank-and-file movements. That is still another of the concrete truths. So, if we're serious about working-class unity we have to be serious about building rank-and-file movements on all levels, in every shop, in every neighborhood, everywhere.

That is a task Marxists must accept. And that is also the path to the growth of class consciousness. It cannot be developed except through the rank-and-file movements. There is absolutely no other way that we can raise the struggle in the trade unions against racism to a higher level except through the rank-and-file movements.

How else can the working class develop a movement of political independence except through the rank-and-file movements. Political independence—that's the other side of the story of Watergate. The idea of an independent political movement based on the working class is now a thousand times more important than it was when we wrote *Lame Duck in Turbulent Waters*. Thus, the path to working-class unity, to class consciousness, to all-out struggle against racism, to class political independence, to rejection of class collaborationism, to ending support for the cold war, to fighting against anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, depends largely on how we develop the rank-and-file movement. It's the key organizational form of struggle.

When the question of unity is raised, many say, "But, what was the Party's position on unity of the AFL-CIO? Wasn't our support of the merger wrong?" But that was not a mistake. The Party correctly supported the unity of AFL and CIO. Some argue that it didn't work out, therefore it must have been wrong. That is not a correct way of looking at problems. If you take that approach, you would have to say the Spanish Civil War was wrong. It didn't work. You would have to say that the 1905 Revolution was wrong. It also didn't work, and neither did the Paris Commune.

The same is true of the Little Steel strike in 1937. In a sense we did not win that strike, we didn't get a contract. Actually, the strike was smashed for a while. But we won after the strike by continuing the struggle.

Clearly, this is no way of dealing with historic events. They must be dealt with as concrete truths. And one of these truths is that long before the merger the Philip Murrys, the Reuthers, the Abels and the McDonalds had caved in to reactionary pressures. They were moving to the Right. That created, of course, a new situation in the country and in the CIO. Under the circumstances, the support of unity was correct. But there were some serious weaknesses and mistakes in how it was carried out, some serious errors that we'll have to deal with more deeply in the future.

Among the more serious weaknesses was that the memberships of the unions were not involved, and therefore it was not a real struggle for unity. It was a top level operation. The conditions for unity were not clearly stated. That was not a basis to bring in the membership. No measures were taken on how to continue to give leadership after the

mergers, which resulted in a period of slippage and confusion. There should have been a rejection of annexations by Right-led unions. Annexations without any conditions and without the involvement and struggles of the membership left the unions wide open and often defenseless.

Thus, the general policy was correct, but it was carried out with some serious weaknesses, and I speak of Party weaknesses in the first place. What stood out was the lack of real struggle for unity. The question of unity is one thing for paid union officials but it is another matter for the worker on the bench, for somebody who works in the shop. The latter's problems were not taken into account.

It is clear the working class can become the universal representative of all democratic forces in society only to the extent that it becomes aware of itself as a class, that it displays class consciousness. This is a precondition for the full emergence of the working class as the advanced sector in the sense that Marx had in mind. And the final concrete truth is that if we do not want to look like Plekhanov's indignant, moralizing doctor, then our work is cut out for us.

Truth is concrete and so is political and ideological work. Our concern is not with truth in general. Ideological work must deal with concrete matters. The concretes of the struggle for working-class unity are: concrete steps to build rank-and-file movements, concrete steps to build coalition forces, concrete steps to build working class unity, concrete steps to advance the never-ending struggle against racism, concrete actions to develop class consciousness, concrete steps to organize working-class forms of independent political action, concrete steps to expose the Meany-Abel policy of class collaboration; concretely putting the spotlight on Meany and the leftover cold-war bag he's carrying; concrete steps for maintaining a continuous campaign of socialist education. For us Communists, in addition to the above responsibilities and as a regular feature of our work, it means concrete steps in circulating our press and literature, concrete steps in building the Party, which makes all of these other concretes possible and meaningful.

Those of you who are not Communists should understand that our concern about circulation of our Communist press and literature, our emphasis on helping workers to understand socialism as working-class power and our emphasis on recruiting new members into the Communist Party are not unrelated to the struggle for class unity. There is no conflict of interests between our endeavors to put an end to capitalism and our advocacy of socialism on the one hand, and our mutual struggle to win concessions from the same corporate monopoly

(Continued on page 117)

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