

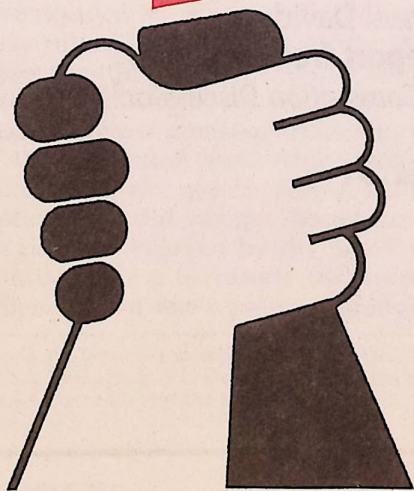
Political Affairs

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Political Affairs

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The South African Communist Party: A Personal View

ANGELA Y. DAVIS

According to Patrick Laurence, a journalist for the *Johannesburg Star* and South African correspondent for the *Economist*, the contemporary popularity of the South African Communist Party can be explained – and perhaps explained away – as a byproduct of the unrelenting anti-communism of the South African governments of the last four decades.

President F.W. de Klerk's predecessors invested [the SACP] with a mystique, especially among young blacks who reckoned that what was bad for the apartheid regime must be good for them. By constantly castigating the ANC for its ties with the SACP, the government succeeded in commending the SACP to the black majority rather than condemning the ANC in their eyes.¹

These observations were published a year ago. If Laurence's explanation is accurate, the thousands of people who have joined the Party since its unbanning in February, 1990 would have to be viewed as unconscious pawns of a process unwittingly unleashed by their adversary. The receptivity to the Communist Party's recruiting campaigns evident in the townships and especially among trade union activists, would be based on the politically naive notion that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Apparently, it did not occur to Laurence that South Africans who have decided to affiliate with the Communist Party might be seeking to further define the present battle for democracy in South Africa in terms that include the possibility of a socialist alternative in a post-apartheid future.

When I visited South Africa with Charlene Mitchell² for two weeks during the month of September, I did not get the impression that the prestige enjoyed by the SACP could be dismissed as a fortunate (or unfortunate, depending on one's political vantage point)

Angela Y. Davis is a member of the National Committee, CPUSA. This article is based on a presentation made to the District Convention of the Northern California Communist Party.

side effect of apartheid's virulent anti-communism. On the contrary, I was struck by the awareness, both by members of the SACP and non-party people alike, of the complex texture of the party's history and the contemporary complexities of socialist engagement. As a person whose spirituality has always been rooted in a consciousness of the historical possibility of revolutionary transformation, I felt something akin to a spiritual rebirth as a Communist. I mean this not in a mystical sense, but in the very real sense of being able to identify with that awesome transformative force that grassroots activists – and especially Communists – are everywhere organizing in South Africa. I do not think I misrepresent Charlene's response when I say that she felt profoundly revitalized as well.

As Communists, the reception we received was one of unreserved enthusiasm, not only within circles of SACP members, but in meetings of the ANC, the ANC Women's and Youth Leagues, COSATU and in community meetings in the townships as well. We clearly benefited from the prestige and popularity of the South African Communist Party. This omnipresent enthusiasm allowed me to recognize that even in the aftermath of the upheavals in the Eastern European socialist countries, an optimistic vision with respect to the future of socialism could be rooted in real historical circumstances. The collapse of the political and economic structures in the Soviet Union, the former GDR and other Eastern European countries did not carry the connotation – so widely represented as necessary – of the inevitable ideological triumph of capitalism.

Such views of the SACP as the one propounded by the journalist quoted at the beginning of this article, are probably informed by the racist assumption that "authentic" Communist Parties are necessarily white and European. Communist Parties, whose membership is predominantly Black can only be bizarre and irrelevant, caricatures of white,

Marxist conspiracies. Others have argued that because the Communist Party of South Africa has "... acquired the distinction of being the world's only growing communist party,"³ South Africa finds itself in a "time warp."⁴ Marina Ottaway, the author of these words, concludes that the close relationship between the ANC and the SACP prevents what she sees as the necessary transformation of the ANC from a liberation movement into a political party, thus "dimming the chances of a transition to democracy."⁵ In her view, the major issue is

... whether democracy [is] compatible with dual membership/leadership and the secrecy that continue[s] to surround the relationship between both organizations."⁶

During the course of our visit, this relationship between the ANC and the SACP did not appear to be the secret pact to which Ottaway refers; rather it came forth as an open relationship, a creative source upon which both could draw in democratically rebuilding their respective organizational structures after so many decades of functioning under conditions of illegality. I will later look more closely at the work of the party and particularly its efforts to continue a process of internal democratization as it wages the battle for a democratic South Africa.

The accusations leveled at the alliance imply that democracy is incompatible with the involvement of the Communist Party, whose history is represented as antithetical to democracy. Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the Party, attempted to answer such accusations during a speech last July 19 at the University of the Western Cape, celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the SACP:

There is no political party which has so openly and rigorously addressed its past as we have done. And in major respects we did so long before the Gorbachev revolution. This capacity to learn from the past is one of our greatest strengths as we move into the future.

But all this does not absolve us from addressing those who remain skeptical because of certain aspects of our past. There are certainly some rather murky skeletons in our historical cupboard. We

are confident, however, that when you put our whole record into the historical balance you will unravel the mystery as to why uniquely, in contrast to the slide elsewhere, our Party has maintained and even increased its popularity.⁷

While in South Africa, I read the most recent popular history of the SACP,⁸ which tended to confirm this critical attitude toward the party's history. As an African American Communist, I was especially interested in the way in which race relations have been worked through within and without the Party. This popular brochure did not attempt to render invisible the problematic and racist aspects of the Party's early history.

The Communist Party of South Africa was founded in 1921 as a result of the consolidation of the International Socialist League and several other smaller socialist groups. While it was the first Marxist-Leninist party on the continent of Africa, its early years were marred by the same racism that defined the evolution of industrial capitalism in South Africa. During the Rand Revolt in 1922, for example, white workers militantly challenged the government after the Chamber of Mines decided to counteract the decline in the price of gold by replacing some semi-skilled white workers with African workers. According to the *The Red Flag in South Africa*,

At no time did the SACP support the slogan: "Workers of the World Unite, for a white South Africa". ...But it is true that the Party failed to give adequate attention at this time to African workers. ... While white workers waged their most militant-ever struggle, African miners remained in their compounds and they continued to work down in the shafts.

According to Robin Kelley, the decision in 1924 to transform the SACP in the interest of African workers provoked some white Communists to resign from the Party.⁹ This period of transformation which eventually led to a party whose membership was predominantly African should be seriously examined, both for its successes and its unsolved problems. Such an examination might yield consequential ideas for the Communist Party, USA and other multiracial Communist parties.

The impact of this history on the white members of the present day SACP struck me most dramatically during a brief moment when I heard a white comrade in Capetown casually speak to an African comrade in Xhosa after a party meeting in the Black township of Guguletu. It was a fleeting and obviously quite ordinary encounter between the two Communists, one white and the other Black. However, the sound of an African language emanating quite naturally from the lips of a white South African bore traces of struggles fought and won in this seemingly unending battle against racism. Later, when I read about the Party's period of expansion during World War II and its aftermath both in membership and in active involvement in African workers' labor and community struggles, I heard the echoes of the Xhosa words recreated by the vocal chords of a white communist. It was not necessarily a foregone conclusion that with the growth of a Black industrial working class would come a corresponding growth in township activism – against police violence, housing shortages, the lack of bus services, food shortages, etc. By this time, it seems that the Party had come to comprehend the complexity and heterogeneity of workingclass struggles – particularly under the pressure of colonialism and racism. It was against the background of this history that the party could shape a theoretical basis for the role it would play in assisting to build a national democratic struggle with the African National Congress at the forefront. As Joe Slovo points out, the enduring alliance that emerged was "based on complete respect for each other's independence and inner-democracy."¹⁰

By the time the ANC was banned in 1960, the SACP, with ten years of experience underground, it could provide invaluable assistance and, in fact, was instrumental in helping the ANC to establish its military wing in 1961, *Umkhonto We Sizwe*:

As a result of the historical development of Apartheid and the evolving resistance, both by African workers and the mass democratic struggle conducted by the ANC, the South African Communist Party – its Black and white leadership – was therefore compelled to address the intertwining intensity of

racism, colonialism and capitalist exploitation by seeking to develop creative interpretations of Marxist Leninist theory.

It is against this historical background that I wish to recount my own contacts, both with the SACP and its members and with people in the townships, the trade union movements, the women's movement and the youth movement. I do not want to pretend that Charlene Mitchell and I met with individuals and organizations representing the entire spectrum of South African politics. Our meetings and encounters were almost exclusively with supporters of the alliance. But I can say that, considering the breadth of our contacts in these circles, we were thoroughly impressed by the apparent sincerity and profundity with which respect for the South African Communist Party was invariably expressed.

I will start with Nelson Mandela, not because the expression of support for the SACP's role in the liberation alliance by Comrade Mandela is new to anti-apartheid activists, but rather because it demonstrates the consistent and principled character of his appreciation of the Party's role in the alliance. On the last day of our visit, Comrade Mandela briefed Charlene and myself on the state's role in promoting Inkatha violence in the townships, which is the major obstacle to the continuation of negotiations. In face of the government's unrelenting anti-communism and the fact that the ANC has been castigated for maintaining its relationship with the Party, even by putatively progressive forces, Nelson Mandela informed us that,

We are standing very firm. We are saying, that will be the day when the oppressed will listen to the oppressor saying we want you to dissolve this alliance in order to fight us. No worthy freedom fighters could ever accept such advise from their own enemy about their alliance. We have made that very clear to them. ¹¹

Since Nelson Mandela, as the President of the ANC has restated this position on many occasions, it is clear that those who support the ANC are simultaneously supporting the alliance of the ANC and the SACP.¹²

Joe Slovo pointed out in his 70th Anniversary speech that,

There is currently an unprecedented offensive against the party and its role in the tripartite alliance. It is alleged that we have the ANC in our pockets. The ultra-left by the way, attack us for being in the pockets of the ANC. The recent ANC conference resulted in renewed media speculation about communists in the ANC and their role.¹³

In this speech, Slovo went on to point out that no one was able to produce any evidence at all that any of the delegates to the ANC conference who were also members of the SACP had received any instructions with respect to the way they should cast their vote. He did point out, however, that it is probably difficult for others to grasp the nature of this interweaving membership between the SACP and the ANC. Marian Ottaway, for example, who argues that in order for the ANC to move in a direction of democracy, it must transform itself from a liberation front into a political party, interprets these close contacts between the two organizations as the major obstacle to democracy in the ANC.

The ties between the ANC and the SACP had evolved during more than 30 years of clandestineness and exile to the point where the boundaries between them had become indistinguishable to all but those directly involved. This virtual merging fitted in well with the liberation-front approach; unity against the enemy has priority, and ideological and programmatic differences must be put aside for the time being.¹⁴

It is true that the interweaving membership is both evidence and a product of forty years of illegality for the party and thirty for the ANC. However, Ottaway, who is an Africa Associate at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins, assumes that the two organizations have thereby merged because, it seems, she accepts the "transmission belt" notion of communist involvement in mass organizations that has been rejected for a long time by the SACP, Devan Pillay, editor of the South African journal *Work in Progress*, argues, from a different vantage point, that the Party must either develop a more independent position within the alliance or else dissolve its own autonomous structures in order to become a

socialist platform within the ANC.¹⁵

Based on my meetings with members of the SACP, I would argue that this unique relationship between the ANC and SACP, far from being an impediment, has allowed party members to acquire vital lessons on the nature of organizational democracy. Precisely as a result of this decades-long alliance, the party was encouraged to look at itself and to begin to democratize its own internal structures even before the revelations about the corruption and bureaucratic distortions in Eastern European parties and governments led to a new emphasis on internal democracy within communist parties.

During a meeting organized by the Party in the township of Guguletu, outside Capetown, Brian Bunting made the point that...

Today every party member is a member of the ANC. That is something unique in the history of liberation movements world wide. I don't think you can find a parallel in any other country.¹⁶

According to the SACP – and no one has ever provided any evidence to dispute this – the Party members always vote in accordance with their own individual analysis and their own conscience. "Following the steps of Moses Kotane," Slovo has written,

The Party leadership has on no occasion instructed Party members to adopt specific positions on any aspect of ANC policy. All members of the Party argue their own points of view without any form or mandate. Those non-communists who sit in these meetings frequently observe known leaders of the Party adopting completely contrary positions on some very fundamental issues.¹⁷

This, Slovo insists, is "a sign of healthy and vigorous debate we encourage when trying to find solutions to the difficult problems facing us."¹⁸ There are, of course, times when the party leadership meets with the alliance leadership – and it is in this context that the party leadership puts its positions forth.

I want to suggest this creative relationship between the ANC and the SACP has played a central role in demonstrating the effectiveness and vigor of democracy. If the party feels no need to instruct members as to what position

to take within the ANC, it is because there is trust in the ability of comrades to make productive, communist contributions to the alliance without receiving specific instructions as to the content of those contributions.

This relationship between the ANC and the SACP has guaranteed that every party member accumulates indispensable experiences in working within a mass movement. The respect for the autonomy and independence of the ANC is mirrored by the Party's relationship to the trade union movement, and particularly to COSATU. While party members play an essential role in the trade union movement – reflected by the current recruitment campaigns attracting large numbers of unionists – the SACP acknowledges "as a matter of principle and practice" the right of the trade union movement to democratically make its own decisions with regard to the right to strike, collective bargaining legislation, etc.

Although Joe Slovo, the General Secretary of the SACP, has played a leading role in assisting communist parties around the world to interpret the upheavals in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe as a clarion cry for internal democratization, Slovo's position is not without its critics within the Party. Harry Gwala, one of the leading critics, published an article challenging some of the major ideas of Slovo's pamphlet, "Has Socialism Failed?" in the *African Communist*.¹⁹

When Charlene Mitchell and I visited South Africa, we heard numerous references to the position represented by Harry Gwala, but never was there an attempt to defame or vilify him. Moreover, the debate within the party as to how the events in the former socialist world can be interpreted has not prevented mass organizing from proceeding apace. In fact, Charlene and I had the opportunity to witness the contacts between Harry Gwala and local members of the ANC during a visit to Mayibuye Settlement outside Pietermaritzberg in the Natal. We were both impressed by the respect accorded Comrade Gwala, who is the head of the ANC in Pietermaritzberg. Comrade Gwala gave a militant speech to the group that gathered at the Settlement, which housed refugees from Inkatha violence. The speech, delivered in

Zulu, was translated for us by an ANC member.

No one is going to get anywhere without fighting. We don't just read books and then go out. ... Liberation is also not from the Bible where you just blow trumpets and then the walls start falling down. There is no Jericho here, this is apartheid and we will fight.²⁰

Clearly, the involvement of all Party members in the ANC as the organization leading the struggle for a democratic South Africa has a transformative effect on the relationship between communists – even those who might occupy opposite positions in internal party debates.

In general, Charlene and I were profoundly impressed by the degree to which communists of all ages were directly involved with masses of people. Govan Mbeki, who is in his eighties, and Ray Mlaba, in his seventies, were actively involved in mass organizing in the Port Elizabeth area.

As a result of an approach which has solidly rooted the Party in the struggles of the people of South Africa, the difficult process of building the Party after the years of clandestineness is proceeding at an impressive pace. It seemed to us that the recruitment campaigns for the ANC are teaching communists valuable lessons with respect to the organizational building of the Party. Wherever we went, we heard about launchings of party groups. The realistic goal is to have 30,000 members by the time of the Congress in December. The advocacy of democracy is today the heart beat of the SACP, the key to the ability of the Party to assist in shaping the democratic future of South Africa – and to place socialism on the agenda as the eventual fulfillment of democracy.

The involvement of Party members in the ANC brings issues into the Party which represent current democratic demands. A passionate debate is now unfolding within the ANC with respect to the position of women. At the ANC conference in July, a resolution calling for an internal affirmative action program was presented. Since the ANC has recently altered its slogan to call for a free, democratic, non-

racial and non-sexist South Africa, progressive women and their male allies are calling for the eradication of sexism within the organization. Considering the sparseness of women in the leadership of the SACP, the ANC debate seems to be serving as a catalyst for a serious discussion on eradicating male dominance within the party as well.

In conclusion, I want to allude to the importance of further examining the experiences of the SACP for the lessons they hold for our party and other communist parties throughout the world. The vitality of the South African Communist Party – probably the most rapidly growing party in the world – bears a direct relationship to the Party's integral involvement in the mass struggles for a democratic South Africa. It is against this background of the Party's mass activism that it has achieved organizational unity. This unity is forged on the basis of an ongoing critical evaluation of the past strengths and weaknesses of the Party. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this examination without fearing that she/he may be the recipient of alienating labels.

During our visit to South Africa it occurred to me on numerous occasions that while there were lessons our party can glean from the history and current theoretical and practical work of the SACP, we have a great deal of history and theory to offer as well. As a party we have developed our conception of working class equality and the struggle for socialism in necessary conjunction with an ongoing challenge to racism and a struggle for African American equality. I would be surprised if the SACP did not find some useful concepts in the paradigms we have developed here in the United States.

The South African Communist Party may be on its way to becoming a new international center from which global inspiration to contin-

ue to fight for socialism can emanate. If this is the case it will be a new center not only in a chronological sense, but also in the sense of establishing new, reciprocal, democratic relationships with communist parties throughout the world. □

Notes

1. *Africa Report*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Sept.-Oct., 1990, 42.
2. Charlene Mitchell is a member of the National Committee and the National Board of the CPUSA. She is the Executive Director of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.
3. "Liberation Movements and the Transition to Democracy: The Case of the ANC" by Marina Ottaway, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, March 1991, 64.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 76.
6. *Ibid.*, 77.
7. "Beyond the Stereotype: the SACP in the Past, Present and Future" by Joe Slovo, in *The African Communist*, Second Quarter, 1991, 6.
8. *The Red Flag in South Africa: A Popular History of the Communist Party*, Publication of the SACP, Johannesburg, 1991.
9. "The Religious Odyssey of African Radicals: Notes on the Communist Party of South Africa, 1921-34," by Robin D.G. Kelley, *Radical History*, vol. 51, 1991. Kelley points out that C.F. Class, one of those who resigned, argued that Africans "could not possibly appreciate the noble ideals of Communism", 9.
10. Slovo, 9.
11. From a conversation with Nelson Mandela, Sept. 11, 1991.
12. The alliance, of course is tripartite in its structure, the third organizational component being COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions.
13. Slovo.
14. *Ibid.*, 76.
15. See Devan Pillay, "Can the SACP Change Track" in *Work in Progress*, No. 76, Aug. 1991.
16. Meeting in Guguletu, Capetown, September 4, 1991.
17. Slovo.
18. *Ibid.*
19. "Let Us Look at History in the Round," by Harry Gwala, *The African Communist*, No. 123, Fourth Quarter, 1990.
20. Mass Meeting at Mayibuye Settlement, Richmond, Sept. 8, 1991.

The Meaning of Our Struggle

FIDEL CASTRO RUZ

I hope that, after such a long trip, you have been able to get a good rest before initiating the tasks of this Congress.

This time I'm not going to present a written report. I preferred to come here with up-to-the-minute ideas, with the latest news, with fresh data, leaving aside formalism, to create the most propitious conditions for analyzing and discussing things. ♦♦♦

We have been watching the development of events in the Soviet Union for quite some time, and nobody can be sure of anything. Things continued their course as they have to date – that is, from bad to worse, but without reaching those supercritical circumstances that would keep us from holding this Congress in the programmed conditions in the city of Santiago de Cuba, with maximum possible austerity and minimum expenditures of fuel, materials and everything else. ♦♦♦

Meditating about this Congress – which some people are already calling history-making, and not out of any whim, because it really is history-making. It couldn't be otherwise, in view of the exceptional circumstances in which it is being held. ♦♦♦

Many people still don't understand what the special period is and the problems it entails. Many are still dreaming about things that we are doing, problems we were solving, and which we had to suspend suddenly when we carried out a large-scale program, including the process of rectification, in a series of fields. ♦♦♦

I don't think that this is the time for making what Karl Marx would have called a conscientious examination – as you know, Marx used that term, and it took a long time to make a conscientious examination. The study of *Capital* took him all his life, and some of the materials took him a lot of time because he wanted to do things right. As I was saying, this isn't the time for making a conscientious, deep examination of all the factors that led to the disaster – aside from the subjective factors, of course; aside from the external factors; aside from the ideological battle that was lost within

This article was excerpted from the speech of President Fidel Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, on October 10, 1991, in Santiago de Cuba, inaugurating the 4th Congress of the CPC.

those societies, subjected to the overwhelming influence of propaganda from the Western consumer societies that emerged intact from World War II, that hoarded all the gold in the world, with which they began their economic, political and ideological competition with the nascent socialist camp; aside from the mistakes; aside from the responsibility of men and of leaders. There isn't time enough to make a profound examination of all those factors.

We are aware of many things that they did and what we haven't done. Perhaps here, face to face with our enemy 90 miles away – inches away, counting the Guantanamo Naval Base – and not protected by any nuclear umbrella, drew up our own ideas and thoughts and developed our own spirit for handling this situation of being in the heart of the West and on the doorstep of the most powerful empire on earth. And that must have helped us, but the time hasn't yet come for making that examination.

We must stick to the facts, and, simply, the socialist camp has collapsed, entire countries have been swallowed up by other countries, the working class has lost power and countries have begun returning to capitalism. The facts are that a disaster has taken place in the Soviet Union, and people in the Soviet Union are talking of a market economy, not socialism. In short, the prevailing voices are in favor of classical capitalism.

The very sad fact is that there's no Communist Party in the Soviet Union now. The Communist Party is illegal, having been dissolved by decree. The fact is that the USSR has been incredibly weakened and is faced with a serious threat of disintegration. Those are the facts.

Can we suppose that those facts don't influence our country? Are we living on another planet or on the moon, that we don't live on earth? Has the revolution taken place inside a glass case, isolated from the rest of the world and its problems? Can we possibly think that way?

It is very important that we know how those events have affected us directly, in material terms. But they have influenced us in more ways than that; they have also influenced us ideologically; many people were confused at the outset of that process, even with some logic because the first

reports were interesting, pretty, pleasing, about "improving" socialism. And who doesn't want to improve socialism? No matter how great the advances made by a society, how much justice it has brought to a society, who doesn't want to see socialism improved? Thus, many people supported similar ideas.

Not only good intentions or the first pretty works, but this also influenced us ideologically – as did the disasters, the unbelievable evolution of events that undermined the confidence, spirits and awareness of many people. But, above all, it adversely affected us terribly in material terms, for, ever since the triumph of the Revolution, we have received cooperation and solidarity from the USSR and the rest of the socialist camp – cooperation and solidarity for which we were and always will be thankful, for we are thankful to the peoples for history-making events and feelings of solidarity, and they can never be forgotten.

When the United States, lord and master of this hemisphere, which doesn't want to know anything about anything that even approximated a revolution, much less a socialist revolution, imposed its severe blockade against us and even cut off our supplies of oil, and we received guarantees that our country would receive the oil we needed, and that the sugar we had for paying for that oil would have a market in the Soviet Union; when we received solidarity in all fields, from that of defense to that of economic development; and when the blockade and isolation forced us to work in one direction, there was only one path – that of friendship and cooperation with the socialist countries – mainly the Soviet Union. The Revolution's plans were drawn up on that basis for 30 years; on that basis, we withstood the blockade, threats and attacks; on that basis, we have defended ourselves. No matter what ups and downs we've had, such as the October Missile Crisis, our people, subjected for many years to the blockade, laid down our guidelines and our path, supported by those solid pillars of the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist camp – pillars that now have crumbled, while the blockade remains in effect, tighter than ever.

Thus, we must now work on the remains, on the ruins of what once were those pillars. It isn't that the economic ties between the Soviet Union and Cuba have been destroyed; it's simply that, right now, nobody can guarantee that the Soviet Union will continue to exist as a great multination-

al country, for its components may fall apart. Many of its states have declared their independence; there is talk of various kinds of union, of a new union and of a common economic space, but what if that great and powerful multinational country, as we once knew it, doesn't exist any more. Countless adaptations and re-adaptations must be made. Before, we developed relations and entered into agreements with a government that represented all of that immense country; now, we must develop relations with republics and enterprises – with dozens, hundreds, and thousands of enterprises and with the various republics – in a time of uncertainty.

Now, we have to understand this – or, as people say in the street, each of us has to get this straight inside. And what work "getting problems straight inside" is! And we Party members aren't the only ones who have to do this; everybody, or as many citizens as possible, must do this. We know that, unfortunately, some citizens don't watch television, listen to the news or read the newspaper; they don't know what's going on. There are people like that; you meet them, and so do I.

If we don't begin here, we won't be approaching problems right; we won't be drawing up our strategy well and we won't be approaching the situation in a way that will enable us to tackle and overcome it.

It's hard to have to talk about these things. It's much nicer to indulge in wishful thinking, to have illusions, and to sweeten everybody's life by bringing super-optimistic, pleasing information. I think that, as revolutionaries and Communists, our first duty to this Congress is to analyze those realities.

Many times, for diplomatic reasons, for reasons of high level policy or because the topics are under discussion, we don't make public declarations that include detailed information about difficulties or problems; but I think that, here in this Congress, we should speak this way, talking about what our problems are, what our economic relations with the USSR and with other former socialist European countries are like right now, what we receive and what we don't receive and how the trade between our two countries has evolved, even though it isn't pleasant to talk about these things.

◆ ◆ ◆ In view of all these problems that have appeared, we began to draw up plans, starting two years ago, and to work intensively – and I'm talking about these problems to show how realistic

and foresighted we were. On the 26th of July, 1989, I said that, if the socialist camp were to disappear, we would continue defending socialism, and that, if a civil war should break out in the USSR – something that we didn't expect would happen, or rather, didn't want – and the USSR were to disintegrate, even in those incredible circumstances, we would continue to defend socialism.

Two years and three months have passed since then. Some people may have been surprised by the possibility of the USSR disintegrating, considering it as likely as the sun's not appearing in the morning, for it was such a solid, powerful, strong country that had survived extremely difficult tests. Some people may have thought that I was seeing pink elephants, a fantasy. But, unfortunately, practically all of this has happened by now. What made me think that this could occur – the happenings and trends that we observed in the Soviet Union.

As a matter of principle and of respect, nobody interferes in the internal affairs of other countries. This is why we have been following a strict policy of respecting what each one does; and likewise, we demand respect for what each of us does. We haven't interfered at all in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, even though we had opinions, we have been very respectful; moreover, nobody could object to the first things that were said, which were about improving socialism.

Who could object to the idea of improving socialism, since we're struggling to do that all the time? Every day we set ourselves the very same goal, and we ourselves had spoken about rectification – in the 3rd Congress – long before anybody was talking about perestroika.

A few months later, we did it even more clearly and categorically, before the famous word *perestroika* had even been mentioned. We had already become aware that mistakes had been made that had to be remedied, that we had to seek solutions for these problems, and rectify negative trends. We noted that some of the problems we had were a consequence of having copied the experience of other socialist countries (which we had done because they were the first to have had socialism and had attained enormous prestige, not all of which was bad – far from it; it would be unfair to say that). There are always useful experiences in many fields that can be used, but, unfortunately, we in our country fell into the trap of copying things mechanically; everything that came from

over there was sacred and unquestionable, and everything that was written down in a little book was indisputable. That tendency took strong root, and I must say, sincerely, that some of our compatriots weren't at all pleased by this.

That was one tendency, and trends are simply trends. That country was our friend. It had given us solidarity and done a great deal for us; it was a country to which we were grateful, a country with many merits in confronting the enemy that was lashing away at us on our very doorstep and imposing its blockade; the USSR opposed the imperialist ideology, its dirty propaganda and its repulsive socio-ideological and other systems, and here, in Cuba, a trend developed at the opposite extreme, which was to idealize everything that came from the socialist countries. We copied them at times and rectified some of the mistakes and experiences of the other socialist countries.

It took us a while, but we finally realized that many things had to be rectified in order to improve socialism without disavowing it. In no way can improving socialism mean denying the tremendous things that it brought to our country, to other peoples and to the world. But we are the first who became aware of the need for rectification.

There was talk in the USSR of improving socialism and of speedily applying the advances of science and technology – an unquestionable, absolutely necessary thing, especially in the struggle against imperialism, with its historic economic resources and technology. As I said, the imperialist countries amassed all the gold in the world after World War II; their industry remained intact, whereas that of the USSR had been completely destroyed. Socialism was developed in the most backward countries in Europe, agricultural countries, not in the most industrialized ones.

There was talk of struggling against income that didn't come from work – a magnificent thing – just as we have to struggle against all manifestations of speculation, theft and illicit gains. I thought that was magnificent.

We also thought that the struggle against alcoholism was magnificent, especially in that country, where people used to drink three times as much as normal – keeping in mind, of course, the cold and all that, with drunks walking along the streets at times. We thought that all that was very moralizing.

I have had the opportunity to become familiar

with some of the ideas and concepts of that first stage that are excellent and good.

I remember when the 70th Anniversary of the triumph of the October Revolution was celebrated, I headed the Cuban delegation that participated. Representatives of the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance had a meeting there, with a very frank roundtable discussion. We spoke about various topics related to the CMEA ♦♦♦

I also had an opportunity to speak about our process of rectification and the bitter experiences we had with the Economic Planning and Management System, applied here after being largely copied from other socialist countries, and I had a chance to warn them that they shouldn't let themselves be carried away by those currents and experiences that we'd had with regard to many things that I don't want to repeat here, because it would take too long. I spoke very frankly there. I suggested, "Try to stop along that path or you'll keep on alienating people and reaping a negative harvest." They listened to me with great interest and many of them told me later, "You know the same thing has happened to us." ♦♦♦

I fulfilled my historic duty by warning them that, at least, they shouldn't support those trends – that is, they shouldn't give in to the temptation to copy capitalism – and, at that time, they listened carefully. ♦♦♦ I didn't see copies of our discussions in that 1987 CMEA meeting until later. But nobody made any reference to capitalism; even remotely: nobody talked about building capitalism, returning to capitalism and destroying socialism. At that time, not a single word was said about that; it seemed something truly inconceivable. Nevertheless, now we find ourselves faced with the things that have happened.

I told you that I said this clearly two years and three months ago, at a 26th of July [celebration], even at the risk of not being understood in those countries – very misunderstood in 1989 – or being misunderstood in the USSR, at the risk of somebody saying, "What craziness is that, saying there may be a civil war here and that the USSR may fall apart some day?"

Simply, when I saw the trends that were developing, when I saw that the authority of the Party was being destroyed, when I saw that the history of the USSR was being reduced to dust – and that has nothing to do with the historic criticism that can be made of any period and that must be made

because man will always have to criticize errors, avoidable or not that were made – unquestionably they were made. But it's one thing to criticize mistakes and another to destroy a country's history. A country cannot exist without history. It's as if we were to reduce to dust the history of this country from the uprisings against the Spaniards – because the uprising against the Czar and feudalism was equivalent to the uprising in our history against the Spanish colonial power and slavery. When I saw those trends advancing with great strength – the destruction of the Party's and Government's authority and the reduction to dust of the country's history, I immediately understood that it was going to have terrible consequences in that great Government, in that great nation, in that great country for which we all felt and still feel profound admiration and gratitude.

Quite early, I understood the mistakes made in the Soviet Union's policy, and at various times from when I began to have a little political awareness. However, I think that no other country has done more in less time, no other country has achieved greater feats in such a short period of time, and to no other country is mankind so grateful as it must be to the Soviet Union. It was the first socialist country in the world, built even at a time when it seemed impossible for a single socialist country to exist, for, according to theory, there had to be a simultaneous revolution in the rest of the developed European countries. That revolution didn't take place after World War I; the reactionaries were clever, intelligent and strong, and the imperialist countries supported them, so the USSR had to build the first socialist state as an isolated, blockaded nation.

The feats that the peoples of the Soviet Union carried out have no parallel in world history. First their struggle to place the workers and farmers in power; their struggle against intervention, when that immense country was reduced almost to nothing; their capacity to generate strength, to fight and defeat the intervention; the need to begin the construction of socialism in a single country that was totally isolated, blockaded and in the midst of hunger; the accelerated industrialization of that country, which was one of the greatest feats in history; their resistance against the fascist invasion – it was the only country that really resisted (the others collapsed like a house of cards in a matter of weeks). That country resisted, and did so even

though the enemy caught it totally off guard – which was also absurd, because you have to be daydreaming, really, and you have to fall into dogmatic criteria and rigid, inflexible schemata, and into absurd logic to think that the Nazis weren't going to attack the Soviet Union.

The Nazis concentrated millions of men and caught it in a surprise attack; the troops were resting, on leave or on vacation; all of the planes were lined up on the airfields. Letting the Nazis make a surprise attack, not being in a state of maximum alert and having their units spread out rather than where they should have been deployed was one of the worst mistakes they could possibly have made. If that hadn't happened, the Germans would never have reached Moscow, or even Smolensk; the war would have ended much sooner and who knows how.

I say this because I am aware of the great military, political, social, and all other kinds of mistakes that were made: compulsory collectivization when it should have been shown that farming on a small scale couldn't solve the problem and speedy, traumatic steps were taken with repression and abuses of power. All those things existed and can be analyzed and criticized, but the feats carried out by those peoples: their heroism; the services they performed for all the world; the struggle against the intervention; the industrial development of their country; the struggle against fascism; the new reconstruction of the country; and, in the midst of that battle, the transfer of their industry to the rear-guard in a matter of weeks – in just a few months – I think that is a feat that has no equal in world history, and that feat was directed by the Communist Party, inspired by Lenin's ideas and shows what a social revolution led by that Party that no longer exists, that was dissolved, could do.

The sacrifice that the Soviet Union made was one of the great sacrifices in history. That is, whatever mistakes may have been made, the construction of socialism and the achievements scored by the Soviet Union are some of the greatest feats in history, and the sacrifice the Soviet Union made was one of the greatest sacrifices in history. ♦ ♦ ♦

Not for a minute should we make the mistake of belittling the Soviet people's great achievements. Now it is unquestionably true that it was backward in the application of science and technology and careless in the application of the results of research. Soviet scientists carried out a lot of

research, but the results of those studies should have been applied methodically by the Party and Government, as is true in our country, rather than haphazardly. They were careless about that, so they produced motors that could be efficient but had three times as much steel as a well-designed, more advanced motor should have; they used two or three times as much fuel as such a motor should use. We know this from our experience with ZIL-130 trucks, which do seven or eight kilometers to the gallon; they might almost be said to have been designed for the consumption of surplus fuel.

The idea of passing from an extensive to an intensive economy was excellent; the economy of the USSR was to stop growing on the basis of the use of a larger and larger work force, because it had already grown on the basis of new factories and a larger work force; rather, it should be developed on the basis of an intensive economy, seeking to raise work productivity with machines and by using more efficient industrial procedures.

All this was contained in the first ideas presented for improving socialism, and it was all perfectly possible, perfectly applicable. Now, I would say, it is absolutely impossible. If the authority of the Party and the Government and the history of a country are destroyed, destroying those things is the sure way to spread disorder and chaos in any country. But many of those ideas are unquestionably good and no objections could possibly be raised to them.

Unfortunately we have seen the development of events that have given rise to imperialism's and capitalism's great euphoria, and, right now, they consider themselves to be the lords and masters of the world.

I told you that we began to work early, as soon as we began to discern that trend, to speed up our top priority plans along with the process of rectification, with our own ideas and concepts, and that's how we drew up plans based mainly on the development of food production; scientific research and the immediate application of the results of those scientific investigations, the development of biotechnology and of our pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry; and the development of tourism, which was a resource we had available. We began to put all our energies into these programs – naturally, never imagining the speed at which the situation in the USSR and the other Eastern European socialist countries was deteriorating.

We're analyzing all the forms of cooperation with foreign capital in many fields. They should be governed by one principle: if we have factories and a work force but we don't have raw materials, we must put that factory into production. The worst thing is that the factories are shut down. If somebody comes along and says, "I'll provide the raw materials, and, between the two of us, we'll sell the product, and I'll collect for the raw materials and make a profit," we immediately say we're ready to listen and reach an agreement. If somebody says, "For such-and-such an export crop, you need such-and-so pesticides, insecticides, chemical products, containers and what-not in order to sell it abroad and I'm ready to provide all that, you'll get so much, and we'll be partners in selling the product" and he knows more about selling than we do and has marketing networks that we don't have, we come to an agreement and begin working together for an export business.

If the tourism situation is complicated by lack of fuel, we'll simply say, "Fuel for tourism is special."

Sometimes we buy a used car worth "X" dollars for tourism because it's cheap and is in good condition and we can make \$100 a day with the car; such a car can pay for itself in three, four or five months and it's a good deal. We may say, "Here are the lubricants, fuel and whatever on consignment for tourism." We can engage in all of those kinds of commercial operations.

Thus, there are variants of all kinds, I've given you only some examples ♦ ♦ ♦

I've talked to you about some variants. Keep in mind that, while that joint venture tourist hotel is functioning, we provide the work force and the country receives its wages in hard currency. Keep in mind that we provide many products and many services. Naturally, we've had to grant concessions, such as exemption from profit tax for ten years, but we share the profits. And, as I told you, both they and we recover our investment in three years. ♦ ♦ ♦

We are very well aware of what we should reserve for our country. These agreements aren't for making rice paddies, which we know how to make ourselves, with flat terraces, seeking high yield; they aren't for building sugar mills because we know how to build and use them. Somebody may come along and say, "I want to put up a refinery" that is worth \$50 or \$100 million "to buy sugar and refine it. Are you willing to make a deal?"

We'll build it in Cuba." The market, construction, workforce and land are already guaranteed.

Thus, there may be all kinds of operations, but they are all analyzed one by one to see if they are in our country's interest, especially for exports – not so much for domestic consumption as for exports. It may be that some industry may designate a part of its production for domestic consumption, however. ♦ ♦ ♦

In some operations, we hold 50 percent; in others, we hold 40 percent and the foreigner, the rest. Each case is analyzed separately.

With regard to Latin America, in view of our ideas about integration, we are ready to go farther and give a kind of preferential treatment to Latin-American capital, in line with the declarations in Guadalajara and the need for Latin-American integration, which we have always sought, even when the CMEA still existed. We said it was transitory and that the natural arena for our economic integration had to be Latin America. *We seek integration with the rest of Latin America; therefore, we are even ready to grant preferential treatment to Latin-American capital.* We are very receptive to foreign capital, which doesn't clash at all with socialism, Marxism-Leninism or the Revolution – much less in the exceptional conditions in which we are living.

Even in his first ideas, at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin didn't propose the immediate construction of socialism in the USSR because it was a backward, feudal country, the vast majority of whose people were peasants. I think that there were 3 million workers in the USSR when the process of the construction of socialism began. He even drew up the theory of capitalist development under the leadership of the proletariat, a thing that was never possible because of the problems that arose: the intervention and the war, that made some of those ideas anachronistic.

Marxist-Leninist revolutionary thinking even included the possibility of capitalist construction under the leadership of the proletariat. What we're doing doesn't involve that – far from it! Rather, it involves the implementation of certain programs and the achievement of certain development with the participation of foreign capital, under the leadership of the Revolution, the people and the proletariat – simply and clearly, under the leadership of the Party. ♦ ♦ ♦

There is only one very real thing that I've meditated about a lot, and I want you to meditate about it, for all of us should do so. There's no alternative to the Revolution, no real alternative. Some people think that the sacrifices we have to make are because we want to save the Revolution and that, if we didn't want to save the Revolution, we wouldn't have any problems and wouldn't have to make any sacrifices. We must get that idea out of the head of anyone crazy enough to give it head room – whether on top, in his hair or in his brain.

As has been the case throughout history, our country is the only one that can solve its problems; only the Revolution can solve our country's problems, no matter how difficult they may be. ♦ ♦ ♦

Who gives anybody anything? And who's going to give us what we had obtained through our struggles, our principles, our policies, and our battle for fair relations between that new world that had been created and us? Who is going to give us anything? Those who dream away, harboring illusions of any kind, forget that we've never been able to expect anything from that neighbor, from that brutal and turbulent North. It is an empire that invades such countries as Panama and is incapable of giving it anything; it wages a dirty war against Nicaragua and makes that country's life difficult, forcing it into a terrible situation, where nobody knows what its future will be, with contras, more contras, comrades, more comrades and all of the stuff the newspapers publish, and it is incapable of giving it anything; it invaded Granada when the only thing it had was the airport that Cuba built there – the salvation and soul of that country – and the only thing the United States did was to inaugurate it. ♦ ♦ ♦

Only the Revolution can solve our country's problems once and for all, in the medium or long term, and there's no alternative. We are the Revolution, with our work, our struggle and our efforts, combatting whatever has to be fought. ♦ ♦ ♦

We are the only ones who can find solutions for the problems that have arisen in the 123 years that have passed since that October 10th on which our struggles for independence began. Only we can and must be able to solve them, maintaining our people's unity, order and spirit of struggle. Any other path, such as failure or surrender, in addition to being contemptible, would imply material sacrifices that would be a thousand times worse. ♦ ♦ ♦

In any circumstances, we will always be ready to wage a war of all the people and to defend every inch of our country. I have spoken about economic matters, but I haven't mentioned that we are here thanks to our bravery and determination to fight to the death, thanks to our determination to make any aggressor pay a price he will be unwilling to pay.

The imperialists will try to divide us so as to seek any pretext with which to "justify" intervention in our country, but our close and solid unity always makes it impossible for them to use that pretext. In any circumstances, we will always be ready to wage a war of all the people and to defend every inch of our country, as long as there is a revolutionary and a gun with which to defend it. As I once said at a student meeting, every person, every revolutionary should say, "I am the army, I am the homeland, I am the Revolution." ♦ ♦ ♦

The Revolution that was born 123 years ago attained socialism a little over 30 years ago. What a history-making advance! What an advance ahead of all the Latin American countries! What an advance ahead of all the other Third World countries! This is what we are defending.

If imperialism could get Cuba on its knees and impose capitalism in our country again, what would remain of all that we have done in the past 123 years? Will we let ourselves become another Puerto Rico, which hasn't yet managed to raise that flag so similar to ours that Marti wanted to accompany us in our heroic struggle for freedom? Will we let ourselves become another Miami, with all of the corruption of that society?

What would remain of everything our people have done in the past 123 years? What would remain of the housing and other buildings the Revolution turned over to the people if their former owners came back to reclaim them? What would remain of the land that we gave to the individual farmers, the cooperatives and the workers in agricultural enterprises, where they became true human beings for the first time, with year-round employment – human beings with full rights and opportunities for themselves and especially for their children? What would remain of our schools in the countryside, our junior and senior high schools; our sports, vocational and art schools; our agricultural and industrial technological institutes?

What would remain of our 300,000 teachers in

this country, which now has the highest per capita rate of teachers in the world? What would remain of our marvelous health system and of our family doctors in the mountains, in the countryside, in the communities, in the factories, and in the schools?

What would remain of our nursery schools? What would remain of the dozens of universities the Revolution created?

What would remain of the dozens and hundreds of scientific centers, many of which are vanguard centers, which have given us a privileged place in the world? What company would get them, and who would boss all those who are now giving all their energies and talent to help their people?

What would remain of our social security, of the assistance given to the physically handicapped and everyone else in this country who needs it? What would remain of our special schools for the deaf and dumb, for the blind, for the mentally retarded and for invalids – schools with a total enrollment of nearly 60,000? What would remain of all that?

What would remain of the dignity and honor of every man and woman in this country?

I always remember that the first thing Martí talked about was the dignity of man, and he even said that, "When many are without honor, others have the honor of many."

Now we aren't just a group, but a people with honor, the majority of the people with honor, a nation with independence, sovereignty and freedom, that will always reject those hackneyed theories that independence should be limited.

What a shock! In a recent meeting, the Soviet representative, together with the German, proclaimed that the right of inspection, even without the country's authorization, should be established.

Obligatory inspection? Yes, when there isn't a single Cuban left who's capable of defending this country's independence!

What can remain of the people's sovereignty and what awaits them in that new, much-touted world order of which they speak, if the ideas of peoples' independence and sovereignty is smashed to smithereens?

If they want to establish a world government,

all right, but it must be a government of the world, by the world and for the world – not a government of the world for U.S. imperialism.

I remember how much representatives of the West have spoken about a supposed theory of Brezhnev on limited sovereignty, and how the concepts of "limited sovereignty" are the vogue in the United Nations and all over, among the big powers. We'd have to see for what peoples it is, which ones are resigned to live in a world without sovereignty – or, if not, let them renounce all of their sovereignty and let us inspect the United States, too; let them renounce all of their nuclear weapons and all of their sophisticated weapons. If they want to establish a world government, all right, but it must be a government of the world, by the world and for the world – not a government of the world for U.S. imperialism. We'll never accept that, but it's what they want and are trying to impose. They won't achieve it, because, in the world, so filled with misery, calamities and suffering from which billions of people suffer, they won't be able to govern anybody, and we will be the first ungovernable ones. They should get that straight.

What would remain of our inspiring history? What would remain of our recollections of our martyrs? What would remain of the names that many of our schools and factories bear? What would remain of our literature?

Therefore, we and we alone can and must solve our problems, face and successfully meet this challenge. If imperialism should force our homeland to its knees and impose capitalism here again, not even the dust of the bones of our heroes, martyrs, internationalist combatants and all the others who gave their lives in this struggle – of those before whom we bow respectfully to pay tribute every day of our lives – would remain.

This is what our struggle means. This is what it means to save our homeland, the Revolution and socialism.

It means saying what Antonio Maceo said at Baraguà or after Baraguà – they were different times – "Whoever tries to conquer Cuba will gain nothing but the dust of her blood-soaked soil – if he doesn't perish in the struggle." □

Kozol's Indictment of Urban Education

Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, New York: Crown, 1991, 262 pp., \$20.

During the Structural Impediment Initiative talks with Japan, Tokyo insisted that if the huge trade deficit with the U.S. was to be reduced and if this country were to remain competitive in the global economy, there would have to be more attention paid to education here. Former chief U.S. trade negotiator Clyde Prestowitz has spoken in similar terms, adding the corollary that the future of this nation would turn on education in the "ghetto." If that is the case, this impressive book by Jonathan Kozol, author of such best sellers as *Death at an Early Age* and *Rachel and her Children* provides substance for the proposition that this nation is in dire trouble for many of our urban school systems are simply falling apart.

To his credit, Kozol does not simply focus on schools in isolation from the larger society or economy. He recognizes that, in this industrialized nation, racism is a substantial reason that explains schools without supplies and books and inordinate class size; and it fulfills the desire to prepare many of our youth for a future flipping hamburgers in fast-food joints. Nevertheless, one could easily close this book with the mistaken idea that all Euro-American youth are receiving the kind of polished education one finds in the more posh suburbs of Westchester County, New York. This is demonstrably false. Latino and Asian-American youth likewise make infrequent appearances in Kozol's pages and this, too, presents a distorted picture of contemporary demographic realities. Moreover, he does not, apparently, envision a role for the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and other unions in the massive effort to cure this festering sore that is urban education.

Still, what gives this book power and helps to account for its current popularity is the searing description of horrible conditions that are condemning a generation of African American youth, in particular, to an uncertain future. Furthermore, Kozol does not shrink from confronting an issue

that many nowadays would prefer to ignore: absent a redistribution of wealth from top to bottom, it is difficult at best to speak in credible terms about true democracy.

East St. Louis, Illinois – termed "America's Soweto" by some – is a major focal point of this study. "The city, which is 98 percent Black, has no obstetric services, no regular trash collection, and few jobs." [7] Pollution from "Pfizer and Monsanto chemical plants" means that the city has "one of the highest rates of child asthma" in this country. [7] "Raw sewage ... backs up repeatedly into the homes of residents." [10] In fact, environmental racism is epitomized in East St. Louis and helps to account for the difficulty that many children have in learning. "Soil samples" there have turned up "disturbing quantities of arsenic, mercury and lead – as well as steroids ... By the time the poisoning becomes apparent in a child's sleep disorder, stomach pains and hyperactive behavior, says a health official, 'it is too late to undo the permanent brain damage'." [10-11] Presumably, those in Eastern Europe clamoring to live as they do in the "West," do not have in mind the African Americans of East St. Louis, Illinois.

Yet, even in those urban areas where environmental racism does not rise to this disastrous level, plain old-fashioned race and class bias blocks the way to learning for many Black youth. Most schools in this nation are funded primarily via the property tax; hence, if one resides in a suburb where homes are worth \$400,000, one is predetermined to have a school with smaller class size and better facilities than in an urban area where property is worth less, and where much of the land is occupied by tax exempt property such as universities, museums and the like, which are primarily utilized by wealthy suburbanites! What is spent on a child in the richest and poorest areas is akin to rates one is accustomed to reading about in apartheid South Africa. For example, in Illinois \$10,000 is spent on a child's education in the wealthiest districts and \$2100 in the poorest. [57] It is Kozol's contention that these rates should be reversed. He argues that poorer children are much more in need and thus deserve more attention and funding.

What is curious is the reaction when progressive forces begin to raise the simple democratic demand for equitable funding. In this alleged bastion of democracy, the U.S. Supreme Court has balked at declaring education to be a "fundamental" right and has resisted ordering the government to spend more on education for poorer youth. Interestingly, supporters of such draconian decisions argue that moving to equalize spending on education would be a step toward socialism and away from capitalism and thus should be opposed. [128, 170, 172] Per usual, racism is not far from such calculations, for equalizing spending on education seems to be resisted most fiercely when it appears that more will be spent on educating African American youth. Just as many in the Democratic Party would rather lose elections than nominate Jesse Jackson and possibly win, there are those who would rather see this economy continue to deteriorate rather than spend more on education that might possibly help Black youth.

Naturally, big business is notably guilty. Though corporate executives prate endlessly about improving education and engage in public relations maneuvers like "adopting" schools in urban areas, they have resisted democratizing the tax system which would be a more reliable and efficient way of attacking this problem of poor schools. In 1983 when a \$60 million plan was proposed in Mississippi to upgrade public education, including early childhood education, higher teacher salaries, a better math and science program, etc., "the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association began a television advertising campaign to defeat the bill." [132] In Chicago, "city and state business associations ... as in many other cities have lobbied for years against tax increments to finance education of low-

income children." [80]

The results of such obstinacy are as predictable as the lagging education of youth of oppressed nationalities who disproportionately populate urban school districts. In New York City, "Classes for the emotionally handicapped, neurologically impaired, learning disabled and educable mentally retarded are disproportionately Black. ... Classes for the speech, language and hearing impaired are disproportionately Hispanic." [119] These youth are slotted into lower tracks that are designed to lead to menial, low wage jobs so as to perpetuate employment segregation. With the advent of the Reagan-Bush Administration, the situation has worsened. Kozol argues that this escalating disaster has impacted the Black community ideologically. In his travels, he observed that "Booker T. Washington was cited with increasing frequency, Du Bois never and Martin Luther King only with cautious selectivity." [3]

More enlightened business circles have begun to recognize that mis-educating a significant percentage of the labor force in an increasingly competitive and complex global economy makes little sense. Activist parents and students, along with trade unions, have been campaigning with a new urgency to reverse this disastrous pattern of enforced ignorance and have zeroed in on the military budget as a likely target in the search for funds. Much of this escapes the author's attention. Yet, by focusing on the rarely cited but all important issue of redistribution of the wealth, while painting a poignant picture of the effects of racism, Jonathan Kozol has rendered enormous service not only to Black youth but to this nation as a whole.

Gerald Horne

This department carries selections from the pre-convention discussions taking place in the Communist Party, USA in preparation for its 25th National Convention to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, December 5-8 1991.

Industrial Concentration Key to People's Advance

In discussing the overall purpose of the policy of industrial concentration, Sam Webb, Secretary of the Labor Commission, CPUSA, put it this way:

It is to help mold the working class, in all its diverse components, into a mighty, combative, and class conscious fighter. It is to deepen and extend the new and positive trends developing in the workingclass movement, while working to isolate or, at least, neutralize the more backward and collaborationist ones. It is to draw together and unify the multiracial, multinational, male-female working class. It is to solidify the alliance and coalition relationships between labor and its allies with special attention to the labor-African American alliance. It is to bring forward the working class as leader in the struggle for democracy and socialism. Finally, but not least, it is to build the Communist Party in the workplace and in the workingclass communities. (Political Affairs, May, 1991)

In his keynote to the Ideological Conference in July, 1989, Gus Hall explained that to achieve this purpose, "We are for working with workers wherever they are, with more emphasis on workers in mass production industries."

It is on this matter of emphasis that I want to deal because the basic aspect of this policy is still being challenged.

Under the influence of the false idea about a "post-industrial society," there are those who say that the service industries have become more important than manufacturing. But the fact is that the United States, no less than other countries, is becoming more and more complex as an industrial society. The connections between manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors are increasingly more involved.

According to Bennett Harrison, professor of political economy at Carnegie-Mellon University:

The reasons why manufacturing is crucial to a healthy

economy haven't changed. First, on average, each new dollar spent on manufacturing creates more than twice as much additional output as does each new dollar of spending on services. According to the Congressional Office of Technological Assessment, this multiplier effect has been growing in manufacturing industries while in the service sector it has remained flat." (Technology Review, Oct. 1991)

Harrison gives other reasons for the primacy of industry in the total economy:

Much technological innovation takes place during the everyday process of making things; skill development often takes place on the shop floor; manufacturing pays consistently higher wages than services...inequality among wage earners is lower, the proportion of very low-wage jobs is smaller.

He also disproves the phoney counterposing of "sunrise" and "sunset" industries, pointing out that:

...basic manufacturing industries are a major supplier to high tech (computers, for instance, have steel cabinets), and so-called mature industries, such as automobiles and steel, depend on advanced technology to raise product quality and manufacturing efficiency. (Ibid)

Coming from one who represents the more objective, realistic sections of the scientific community, this corroborates what the CPUSA has maintained right along: that the mass production industries are and will remain basic to the economy of the country.

In other words, they are not a transitory phenomena "passing fad" so to speak, which can be replaced by, or counterposed to other sections of the economy.

In fact, the inter-relationship and inter-dependence of all productive sectors grow more intricate, with manufacturing the essential core, the center stage where the class struggle takes its most direct, open forms. This is what underlies the long

established policy of concentration.

That is why that policy is not a passing, transitory one. We're in it for the duration, if it takes five years, ten years, our lifetime. It is the foundation upon which our strategic ideas are based. It is fundamental to working out the U.S. road to socialism.

It is not by chance that the policy of concentration is among the first targets to come under attack from those who feel the struggle is more than they can cope with and from those too ready to capitulate to difficulties and pressures from anti-working class sources; in a word, from opportunism.

The liquidation of shop organization of Communists, as well as resistance to establishment of shop clubs is a sure sign of the influence of opportunism. We saw that in the history of the CPUSA, we see it today in the tragic events in the USSR.

The industrial concentration policy assures the Party of its base in the working class and in the industrial sector of that class. It assures that the Party's policies are based on those who most directly face the monopoly class enemy daily, who must daily fight the class enemy for their own and their families' survival. It guarantees that our Party remains loyal to the working class.

Industrial concentration is not at all difficult. It is extremely easy to understand. It is the concentration of our small workingclass Party's resources on moving the strongest, most advanced, most compact, strategically placed section of our class in order to most effectively move the entire class in an anti-monopoly, revolutionary direction.

The industrial core of our working class is the strongest component of our nation's trade union movement. It is this section that has the most battle experience in the class struggle, the most organizational know-how. There is a rich, fine tradition of class struggle here to play a leading role in the fight.

The industrial unions in steel, auto and mining set the living standards for the entire non-monopoly population of the U.S. In these all-important contract battles, the direction is set for all other labor organizations. As union workers go, so goes the entire working population, non-union working folks included.

It is the industrial core of workers which is

forced, whatever other political views they hold, to think in terms of broad, wider forms of unity to confront any problem. Whether in their communities or on the shop floor, industrial workers have learned that only unity has brought victory against the common class enemy. Moreover, in today's world, no industrial worker can expect to solve any problem without dealing with the fact of international capital, interlaced production, whipsawing, etc. This forces a much larger concept of united action and what it takes to win.

Only 2,500 Pittston miners moved the entire labor movement, even the world trade union movement. It inspired a national "wildcat" coal strike, calls for a general strike, marches, rallies and solidarity caravans. A massive, worldwide solidarity campaign developed, reaching beyond the labor movement. In our own country, sectors of the middle class were moved into sympathy support by this class action. Lessons of unity and struggle, taken from the Civil Rights movement, were learned by our class as a result of this sharp class confrontation. It all added up to a major victory.

Our fight in Lorain, by 2,500 workers, inspired marches, rallies, city council resolutions. While it coincided with a whole series of other strikes at the time, the steel strike immediately brought into being a solidarity committee representing, among others, the auto workers', teamsters' and teachers' unions. It was a given in this workingclass town that all must respond. Shopkeepers, students, minority, women's and unemployed organizations responded. The industrial core moved the whole movement including other, non-capitalist sections. The result was a victory, a decent contract.

It is thus clear that it is not necessarily the numbers that count, but the strategic position of basic industry workers.

There are 20 million workers in manufacturing, 30 million total when you add mining, construction and transport – about the same as at the end of World War II. While the 500 largest industrial corporations employ only 11 percent of the workforce, they account for 55 percent of total corporate profits. This is far from showing the vanishing role of industrial workers!

None of this means that one group of workers is better, smarter or more favored than any other group of workers. Industrial concentration points a general direction for our Party. It is a scientifically

arrived at political policy, not a religious, dogmatic tenet. It must be applied to our own conditions, applied flexibly and in a principled way.

Each club must determine its focal point of concentration in its area – which is the plant or institution or sector whose action is capable of rallying the broadest maximum support. At the same time, we should all give thought to how to reach and influence workers in the industrial core unions and industries.

This is the work of the entire Party, not industrial workers alone. If we work in the peace movement, we should examine how to reach and move the industrial unions on peace issues. Can we convince a local union or labor council to organize or endorse a peace rally? Can we raise the issues which point out that peace is economically, politically and socially in the workers' self-interest and get this information to workers? Can a "Labor for Peace" group be set up or a labor caucus in a major existing peace organization? Can union leaders speak at a rally or forum? Can we place articles in union papers? Can we meet workers in clubs, bars, churches, sports fields, etc.?

The same thinking and discussions must go on in all our work. Unless we give priority attention to reaching workers we undermine the effectiveness and durability of all our work.

Essential to the concentration policy is the decisive task of helping to bring forward multiracial, multinational workingclass leadership. It is one of the most important contributions we can make to advance the interests of trade unions and older people's movements. This is the way to go for achieving unity, principled leadership with a historic, longer range perspective.

In Lorain, workers helped set up and lead a large multi-class environmental movement. Workers and union leaders were the first to respond to racist attacks and set up a multi-racial, anti-racist organization. Women workers formed a "Women of Steel" group to fight for equality. Women workers are the largest sector of our class and if we don't reach them the labor movement is in deep trouble.

Community activists and clubs have a role right in the middle of industrial concentration. To be successful, concentration demands a two-pronged approach, that is, within the union and

within the community. Where one aspect is lacking, we limp or fall

When massive layoffs hit our area, our comrades tried to get union-led unemployed committees set up. We ran into stiff resistance. We were successful only when we organized meetings with an African American minister who is also a steelworker, with folks from his church, with union members as well as Communists. A new committee was born, based at the church. Rallies and food distributions were organized. It was then that the union leadership responded by setting up its own committee. This in turn inspired numerous other unions to set up committees and it all resulted in a large labor, African American-led coalition.

Even our work on Pittston solidarity ran into initial resistance from conservative Federation leadership. But the left-led community group and left labor leaders worked with the USWA International office and the miner's union to bring miners in to speak and a massive solidarity support campaign resulted.

Workers live in communities. They have families, friends and they love to party, play ball, etc., and they study. To approach concentration by ignoring community work is dogmatic, narrow and just won't work.

We should look at the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) in a new, special way. This organization represents the most advanced section of African American trade unionists. It has provided clear leadership on literally every issue our class has faced since its founding, especially on the question of racism. They have fought a fine, principled battle for unity, helping to stiffen the backbone of the labor movement. While all areas have suffered under the Reagan-Bush racist offensive, it must be said that labor and especially the industrial unions have generally held the line. Affirmative action has been written into the contracts in these areas. CBTU has earned the respect of the whole labor movement and must be given much credit, along with many union allies, Black, white and Hispanic, for the victories won. It is integral to our concentration policy that CBTU be built and further strengthened, and that the unity of all forces in the struggle to save and extend affirmative action against the Bush racist offensive be further strengthened in action.

Concentration is a long-range policy. It calls

for persistence and confidence in the working class.

I remember, like yesterday, when some years ago Comrade George Edwards told me that the National Committee of our small Party had decided to call for a mass labor-led march on Washington. That was ten years ago, and I told him, "Yeah, when the pigs fly."

A week later, at a TUAD conference, Mayor Hatcher of Gary called for a labor march on Washington. Days later, CBTU issued a similar call. Others followed. We all know the result: Solidarity Day I.

Our paper, the *People's Weekly World* was the only paper to get an award from the UMWA for our solidarity with the Pittston striking miners.

It is not always easy, but industrial concentration is the only way to win.

What does concentration mean for our comrades in industry?

♦ Organizing, first and foremost, to wage the class struggle;

♦ Working at all times to fight racism and all other forms of divisive, anti-working class ideas;

♦ Working at all times to break down parochial attitudes which place the interests of one section, craft or department above the interests of the total workforce in the plant;

♦ Working to build coalitions on all questions with other unions, community groups, churches, etc.;

♦ Building the Left movement, adding the Communist plus to our struggle; working to build working class, anti-monopoly unity;

♦ And most importantly, building our working class Party, especially among industrial workers, their friends and families, and among oppressed minority workers. This must not be an afterthought at our meetings. Only our Party builds the fight for Socialism and the class unity that leads to progress. Building the Party is the guarantor of progress in all areas.

Industrial concentration strengthens the multi-racial, multi-national working class core of our Party. This serves to strengthen the wider Left and the labor movement.

As V. I. Lenin said,

Isolated from Social Democracy (as the Communist

movement was known before 1917) the labor movement becomes petty and inevitably bourgeois; in conducting only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and runs counter to the great slogan, "The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves. In every country there has been a period in which the labor movement existed separately from the socialist movement, each going its own path; and in every country this state of isolation weakened both the socialist movement and the labor movement. Only the combination of socialism with the labor movement in each country created a durable basis for the one and the other.

Bruce Grant

A Moscow Observation

Near chaos has followed in the wake of the August days, resulting in rapidly growing disillusionment with the "democratic revolution." Industrial production has declined by 17.5 percent by admission of Grigory Yavlonski, head of economic reform. Yavlonski has warned that should it drop to 20 percent, only another 2.5 percent, the economic crisis would be out of control. It should be recalled that during the very depth of the Great Depression in the U.S. in the 1930s, the economic decline was 15 percent. Inflation is rising at the rate of 2 to 3 percent weekly! 100 to 150 percent annually!

Severe shortages now embrace practically all products, especially food. The *ocherads* (queues) now are sullen. On everyone's mind is the question: what will the winter bring? Fear of crime is mounting and now haunts the Soviet people almost as much as it does Americans.

On the national scene, a point is being reached where no authority is really in control. The "hot" spots grow and are getting hotter almost by the day. Now it's the Chechen-Ingush Republic that threatens to turn the North Caucasus into another Nagorny Krabakh. The "democratic revolution" is giving rise to growing mob rule. In Dushanbe, capital of Tadzikistan Republic, "Democrats" have united with Islamic fundamentalists to besiege the parliament building. They demolished Lenin's statue and demand the resignation of the government. Emissaries of the Russian Federation are being con-

stantly dispatched to ever-growing crisis spots – Sobchak to Dushanbe; Vice-President Rutskoi to Grosny, capital of Chechen Republic. The much publicized Yeltsin-Nazabarev “agreement” in Nagorny Karabakh has only resulted in further intensification of the bloody conflict. The aggressive anti-Center campaign conducted by Yeltsin is now being turned against the “democratic” leaders of the Russian Federation.

The destruction of the CPSU and RCP by the two Presidents, Yeltsin and Gorbachev, has accelerated and intensified the all-Union disintegration. Notwithstanding its serious weaknesses, the CPSU has for seven decades been the backbone of the USSR and socialism. That backbone has been broken, at least temporarily. The failed putsch served as the pretext for disintegration of the USSR in the name of “independence” and “sovereignty.” And the leaders of the “independence” movement were, in the main, former members of the Political Bureau of the CPSU! Republic followed Republic, and their Communist Party leaders not only declared their independence, they enacted legislation against the party that they led only yesterday, seizing its property, assets, dissolving it and forming a new political party. It is doubtful that in all history there has been such mass reneging in top circles, as in the USSR. And the example was set by the public resignation of its General Secretary, who not only called for the party’s dissolution, but together with Yeltsin, issued edicts to implement its liquidation.

Perhaps this final act throws new light on the passivity that Gorbachev displayed in the face of the rising wave of anti-communism, the puzzling toleration of anti-communist “Communists,” even in the Central Committee. I do not believe Gorbachev acted consciously in this respect as many now firmly believe. But what is important is the objective result – the present state of the new USSR. He rationalized his role as a “savior” of the party which could only be “saved” from its doom by transforming it into an amorphous, liberal-democratic, vaguely socialist-oriented organization such as Alexander Yakovlev openly advocated. The Democratic Reform Movement – soon to become a party – answers that description and in all likelihood that will be Gorbachev’s new political home. Now the alliance is complete – Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Yakovlev, Shevardnadze – four former leading members of the

Political Bureau of the CPSU! Where can one find renegades to match this? It has been this desertion at the top which developed and grew progressively, especially in the latter half of the perestroika years, that to a very large extent undermined the party, demobilized its ranks, and prepared the soil for its dissolution. The failed coup provided the pretext for the “legal” dissolution of the CPSU and RCP and it was exploited with a vengeance rare in political history. But the anti-communist “democrats,” especially their leaders, did not conceal that their chief aim was to eliminate the CPSU as a force in the political affairs of the USSR. Yeltsin’s edict abolishing party organization in the enterprises, armed forces and government bodies, was a calculated step in that direction.

It should be noted that despite the pleas and demands of the mass of the members of the CPSU and RCP, despite the resolution on that question by the April 1991 CC Plenum, Gorbachev refused to issue a decree countering that unconstitutional act directed against the party. In the midst of the ever-increasing threatening chaos and disintegration, the CPSU and RCP have alone been excluded from the political scene by decree. It is in a state of indefinite suspension – tantamount to illegalization. It has no assets, no money, no headquarters, no schools, no press (which it owns), no publishing house, no bookstores. All have been taken away from it and many, if not most, of its buildings have already been “distributed” to other organizations by the lord-like decrees of renegade Communists like Gavril Popov, Mayor of Moscow. The entire political and social superstructure is now in the hands of anti-communist “democrats” and extreme nationalists. The all-Union TV and radio network is now run by Yegor Yakovlev who transformed *Moscow News* into the flagship of the anti-communist press. (Yakovlev, it should be noted, made his reputation as a specialist on Lenin). It is no exaggeration to say that today the Soviet TV and radio out-redbait even the U.S. anti-communist media during the McCarthy hysteria. The Soviet people are subjected daily to far more anti-communist propaganda than most peoples in the world. What is left of the USSR is now the center of anti-communism. Everything is done to malign and distort Soviet and CPSU history. One would have to dig back into the 1920s, the years of crude anti-Sovietism, to match the low level of rewriting of “history” in the USSR today. Lenin, the Bolsheviks,

are depicted in the same dark colors as was the case in the early years of anti-Soviet propaganda before the appearance of more sophisticated Sovietologists. Even tsarist history is being portrayed nostalgically, in bright colors as a "progressive" contrast to "communist totalitarianism."

Here, the Russian Orthodox Church is now playing a particularly reactionary role. It has openly and aggressively emerged as anti-communist and anti-Soviet. Patriarch Alexis II sets the tone in this respect. He lent his name and that of the church to the campaign to rename Leningrad, St. Petersburg. In his speech at the inauguration of Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation, he publicly condemned seven decades of Soviet history as responsible for the degradation of the human spirit in Russia and for all the present ills. The church now is being promoted to fill the ideological vacuum left by the banishment of the Communist Party and Marxist-Leninist ideology from the TV and radio. The church is making up for decades of biding its time, and it is being consciously aided in this respect by the anti-communist "democrats" in control of the mass media. Not a day passes without the church, its clergy on various levels, officiating in all public functions, appearing on TV. Clergymen are now actively engaged in politics – anti-communist politics.

Rarely has there been such an intensive effort to discredit Communists and Marxist-Leninist ideology. And the attack is now centered not on Stalin, as at the early stage, but on Lenin as the "source" of all the evil and the woes of the Soviet people. Reagan's "evil empire" is the image of Soviet history now being portrayed by the Soviet mass media. The only difference, and it's an obnoxious difference, is that it is coming from the "inside," from professors of philosophy, history, philology and economics who earned their doctorates on the basis of "Marxist-Leninist" theses.

Lenin, his teaching and his works, will of course survive these petty-minded detractors. But it must be soberly faced that great damage is being done, particularly to the young generation. It is among the youth that the CPSU has suffered its greatest setbacks. Recently, at its last Congress, the Komsomol dissolved itself. The delegates who officiated at its burial were overwhelmingly representatives of the new "business men and women" among the youth, yuppies – Soviet style! For some time the main activ-

ity of the Komsomols has centered around various business ventures, especially TV salons which specialize in low grade films and near-pornography, particularly U.S. imports. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Moskovski Komsomolets*, were among the newspapers in the very forefront of anti-Soviet, pro-capitalist propaganda.

The "democrats" whose chief stock in trade was their "struggle" against bureaucracy and the diktat of "Partycrats" have demonstrated that they in no way take a back seat in bureaucracy and diktat. Yeltsin largely rules by edict and has dispatched his prefects to carry out his orders in the "provinces" in the true spirit of the ancient imperial Romans. Gavril Popov, the Mayor of Moscow who came to power on the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets," is doing his utmost to dissolve the Soviets and strip them of their powers (and meeting increasing resistance, including from former "democratic" supporters. Among the chief supporters of Popov, in this struggle within the ranks of "democrats", are Alexander Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze. The cry is now for "authoritarian" rule! In face of the mounting discontent which can explode into mass struggles, the turn to "executive power," i.e. suppression of the discontent, is now being considered and the groundwork for it being laid. At the same time, emissaries are being sent to the West to warn that without substantial financial aid the "Communists" will threaten their rule.

One of the chief reasons, if not the main reason, for maintaining the CPSU and RCP in a state of indefinite suspension, is to immobilize them and prevent them from leading mass struggles against the economic chaos, political disintegration and the undermining of the socialist gains. It must be said that the top leaders of the CPSU have long surrendered the millions of the members to a state of immobility and uncertainty. This is now reflected in the near, if not total bankruptcy of leadership. Millions of Communists have, in effect, been left leaderless in the greatest crisis the CPSU has ever confronted. Granted that the suspension and the seizure of its assets have crippled the party

But until very recently there has not even been an effort to organize a fightback, a movement in defense of the rights of Communists. All this only serves to demonstrate the political ulcer that was eating away at the CPSU at the very top.

Nevertheless, the party has not evaporated. It is

being held together on a city, area, regional and district level. Members still pay and collect dues and turn it over to party secretaries. Makeshift, temporary offices have been found and contact with members maintained. Committees for Defense of Communists are being formed in many cities. Others are grouped around Lenin societies and struggles are being conducted to save the Lenin Museum in Moscow and prevent the removal of Lenin's remains from the Mausoleum. A group of social-democratic oriented CP members, including deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet, Roi Medvedev and Anatoly Denisev, have organized a conference to call a Congress to set up a Left Forces of Socialist Orientation Party of the Russian Federation.

Perhaps the most influential Marxist-Leninist oriented movement, which has large support among workers, is the Communist Initiative (originally called the Leningrad Initiative), which will hold its Congress Nov. 24-25 in Ekaterinburg, formerly Sverdlovsk. There are also efforts to hold a Congress, in December, that would be broader and more representative, to consider the future of the CPSU and RCP, the inheritors of its assets, etc.

A process of regrouping of forces representing various trends within the CPSU is now beginning to take place. A single organization will hardly emerge. The ideological differences are too sharply drawn. For some time there existed in one organization divergent trends, including those that became quite anti-communist, like the Rutskoï group which closely allied itself with Yeltsin.

The following trends seem to be emerging: the social-democratic, which envisions a parliamentary party of the Western type, based on the diluted party program worked out under Gorbachev's leadership. How strong this group will be remains to be shown at its Conference Oct. 26 or 28. It will undoubtedly attract many who may not agree with such a perspective, but will be drawn to this movement because they are seeking some form of party existence and activity.

There is a movement of Marxist-Leninist orientation under way. This will be largely grouped around the Nov. 24, 25 Congress of the Communist Initiative. Here, too, it will be shown to what extent party members, especially workers, will support it.

There are small groups being formed on the ba-

sis of the Marxist Platform, which has split into two or three groups. One has formed the Union of Communists based on a program halfway between Marxist and Social Democratic. There are very likely to emerge other grouplets since there is an active search for some organized form.

A neo-Stalinist party has been formed around Nina Andreyevna. It may well gain in membership in the present situation but it will not attract wide sections of the CPSU and RCP.

Particularly lacking today is a clearly-oriented Communist press. *Pravda* today makes no pretense of being a Communist organ. It is "independent", with no clear political position. In it are expressed the old Gorbachev line as well the thinking of those who regard the General Secretary's act as desertion. The newspaper has removed the hammer and sickle, as well as the slogan, "Workers of the World Unite" from its masthead. And this is more than a typographical change. At the same time *Pravda* still enjoys mass support from Communists who are rallying to its support with financial and moral aid. It seems to me that the character of *Pravda* reflects the present uncertain situation in the CPSU and is yet to be clearly determined. At present it appears to be inclined toward the social democratic trend.

Sovietskaya Rossia has been placed in a very difficult position. A sword of Damocles hangs over its head in the form of constant pressure and threats to close it down. It doesn't even own its own furniture. Thus far, it has not even been given legal permission to appeal for financial support from its readers. Pressure has led its editors to dilute much of its material and for this it has been criticized by its readers. The danger is that such self-censorship can undermine its considerable mass support. Potentially, it has a wide base among the real Left within and around the RCP. The newspaper, in correctly seeking to unite Communist and patriotic forces, at times gives into nationalist influences. This tends to blur its political orientation.

Perhaps one of the clearest so far in its orientation as a Communist newspaper is *Glasnost*, the weekly which was formerly an organ of the CC CPSU. It has refused to resort to self-censorship and while it reflects various trends within the CPSU, it has not, like *Pravda*, transformed itself into an "independent" newspaper.

There are also many local party newspapers, many of which have been swallowed up in the rush to "independence." However, there are quite a few which still reflect a party position.

Party-oriented newspapers now face open discrimination, such as that with which, readers of the U.S. Communist press are long familiar. *Souzpechat*, the distributing agency controlled by the "democrats," refuses to carry many former party newspapers, or at the very least drastically limits their sale and visibility. Pravda has been compelled to publicly protest against this "boycott."

There has been a real boom in newspapers. Hundreds, if not thousands, reflecting all possible political trends from monarchist, anarchist, nationalist, to various Left and Right orientations, have appeared. Many are financed by dubious sources, including the former Black Market which has gone into legal businesses. Hawkers sell them on the street and around metros.

It is in such an active but ideologically confused situation that the position of Communists is very weakly expressed. This is, of course, extremely aggravated by the calculated immobilization of the CPSU. But even before the August days, the party was being ideologically disarmed. Never was its ideological work so diluted and distorted. Particular damage can be attributed to Alexander Yakovlev who was for some time in charge of its ideological work. It is now clear, even though he concealed the anti-Marxist-Leninist views which he now boldly proclaims, Yakovlev undermined the party's ideological work. It was he who promoted the anti-communist press such as *Moscow News* and *Ogonyok*. Step by step, the mass media was turned over to the anti-communist "democrats." It was all part of a calculated plan to shift political power away from the CPSU and into the hands of the anti-communist opposition. It was done by assault from without and by disarming the party from within. At the very least, this was aided by Gorbachev's passivity and in effect, acceptance of this unprecedented surrender by a political party of its most effective means of mass influence.

It is now clear that Gorbachev's concept of perestroika was always very close to that of Yakovlev and Shevardnadze, Popov and Sobchak who regarded perestroika not as the correction of the socialist path opened up by the October Revolution, but the

rejection of that path, and return to capitalism. Thus, I believe, Gorbachev's political, economic and ideological policies, his steady retreat and capitulation to the forces of rejection, his passivity in the face of the rising danger of anti-communism, his efforts to "reform" the party along the liberal-democratic lines advocated and now openly pursued by Yakovlev and Shevardnadze, his endless "compromises" which permitted the nationalist forces within the CPSU (starting with the Baltic Republics and spreading like a venomous virus to Republic after Republic), to dismember the party – all I believe have to be reexamined in light of his desertion of the CPSU and active participation in its "legal" destruction. Of course, the question has to be answered: What gave rise to the Shevardnadzes, Yakovlevs, Popovs and Gorbachev's final act of desertion? What made the victory of the anti-communist, anti-Soviet forces possible?

It is a mistake to attribute all this to the adventurous putsch which provided the ideal pretext for the legal destruction of the CPSU and RCP. The process of dissolution had progressed very far before the putsch. In fact, it was in part because the process of disintegration of the CPSU and USSR was already so advanced, that the soil was prepared for such desperate, farcical adventures. The CPSU was already no longer the ruling party. With Yeltsin's election, in June, and the victory of the anti-communist democrats in the Russian Federation, power was already almost fully in their hands. Only the Presidency of the USSR stood between them and complete victory. The circle was completed with the Yeltsin-Gorbachev alliance.

I believe the tragic final act has to be regarded, as the outcome of the struggle mainly between two forces: the forces of correction and the forces for rejection. Why did the latter prove to be the stronger? I believe, while the subjective factors, the serious weaknesses of the CPSU, the role of its leadership and particularly of Gorbachev, have much to do with tragic outcome, it is the objective factors which were decisive. I would only again stress: the revolutionary spirit of the Soviet people was exhausted by the unprecedented ordeals they were compelled by history to undergo in the course of an ordinary lifetime. It was this exhaustion that made possible the emergence of Yakovlevs, Shevardnadzes and yes, the final desertion of Gorbachev, the incubation of anti-communism within the CPSU.

And it is only in the process of reviving the revolutionary spirit that socialism, the socialist state or states, the new Communist Party, will rise from its present defeat. That such a revival will take place, history has largely foreordained. The revolutionary transformations ushered in by the October Revolution in the 20th century, need to be and will be corrected to bring them in tune with the new conditions of the 21st century. The clock of history may be temporarily set back, but time moves forward!

Finally, a new and growing danger is arising. It is now clear (and even leaders of the "democrats" are beginning to speak openly of this), that turning the clock back to capitalism, authoritarian rule, dictatorial measures, have to be employed. That is why Shevardnadze, Popov, Sobchok – all are stressing executive power, the power of the president, the army and the need to do away with the Soviets. Already, the edict, ukaz, has become the chief instrument of rule.

The "democratic" press, TV, radio, pronouncements from government leaders – all constantly warn of a second putsch, mass disturbances in the winter. National guards are being formed. It seems to me this is largely being done to prepare the Soviet people for authoritarian rule with all that it implies. If the socialist state, the CPSU, were disarmed in the face of disintegration forces, the newly rising capitalist-oriented state (which still has to contend with the socialist economic base and the socialist "habits" of the mass of the Soviet people) is conscious of the need to take all necessary measures, including authoritarian, to defend itself. It counts on moral, material and political support from its new allies in the West, especially the U.S.

Another factor has to be considered. The dissolution of the CPSU and its members' immobilization at present, has created a political vacuum which is now being filled by parties, groups, organizations of various trends, but all, to one degree or another, anti-communist. Particularly active, and potentially among the most dangerous, are the extreme nationalist organizations. The union of nationalists and anti-communists has already demonstrated its destructive power (in the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia and now Tadzikistan and Azerbaijan). It is also emerging as a dangerous

force in the Russian Federation. Here, the potential danger is particularly great as Yugoslavia should remind us.

The one force that can play a decisive role in combating this danger is the new Communist Party arising on the base of the CPSU and RCP but not confined to it. Not only has history brought about the natural and severe process of cleansing the party of its careerist, corrupt, anti-Marxist-Leninist elements, it has also opened the door to the entrance of fresh, dedicated, militant internationalist forces, especially among workers and collective farmers.

But time now is of particular importance. The latent situation contains too many explosive forces for the formation and active role of the new Communist party (whatever its name) to be delayed. The party unquestionably is potentially the most powerful, most experienced force. No other political party can match it, not only in numbers, but in the dedicated quality of its members. It is here, in the reformation of the party, that an extremely important role will be played by the various initiative conferences and congresses now being prepared. The likelihood is that more than one party will be formed. This, however, need not exclude one of the most important tasks, the united front of the Left, socialist-oriented parties and organizations acting in conjunction with patriotic, not nationalist, organizations and groups whose aim should be rallying an all-Russian, and all-Union coalition for overcoming the economic chaos, for defense of the socialist gains, for the resurrection of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It should not be forgotten, it was only in March 1991, that about 75 percent of the participants in the all-Union referendum voted for the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. With all the talk of "democratic revolution" and upholding the Constitution, it is this clearly expressed will of the overwhelming majority of the Soviet people that is today being ignored and violated. Actually, one of the main tasks now confronting the Soviet people and, thus, the new Communist Party, is to restore real democratic rule in place of the present rule by presidential edicts! Here, particularly there needs to be conducted a mass struggle for truly "All Power to the Soviets."

Michael Davidow

- Adams, David:** *Economics of the Arms Race: A Two-Edged Sword*, September/October 16.
- Alarcon, Evalina:** *California Communists in Statewide Electoral Coalition*, January, 14.
- Aptheker, Herbert:** 'The Civil War' – *Gripping but Flawed History*, [a book review], February, 31.
- Bachtell, John:** *The 4th National YCL Convention: Charting New Ground*, January, 6.
- Bayer, Michael:** *A Hemispheric Conference of Communist Parties*, June, 19.
- Bloice, Carl:** *An Observation on Current Economic Changes in the Soviet Union*, May, 14.
- Bonosky, Phillip:** *Red Squads and Police Repression* [book review], August, 31; *A Serpent in a Capitalist Eden*, November, 11.
- Brodine, Marc:** *Keep Our Eyes on the Prize* [pre-convention discussion], July, 13.
- Cameron, Kenneth Neill:** *A Note on Hegel and Marx*, November, 18.
- Castro, Fidel:** *The Meaning of Our Struggle*, December, 7.
- Collins, James:** *The Other Philadelphia Story* [book review], June, 23.
- Communist Party, USA:** *On Events in the Soviet Union* [document], September/October, 30; *There is No Need for a Shooting War* [document], February, 1; *With the Working Class and People – Unite for Peace, Justice and Equality* [document], June, 27.
- Davidow, Mike:** *A Report from Moscow* [pre-convention discussion]; December, 20 *Strengthening the Party: Key to Soviet Stability*, April, 21.
- Davis, Angela:** *The South African Communist Party: A Personal View*, December, 1.
- Dennis, Thomas (with Tony Monteiro):** *The Pervasive Menace of Institutionalized Racism*, February, 5.
- Economic Commission, CPUSA:** *The Social and Economic Crisis in the USA*, September/October, 2..
- Editorials:** *A Day of Celebration and Reaffirmation*, January, 1; *International Women's Day 1991*, March, 1; *The Spirit of Woodstock, 1921: 70 Years of a United CPUSA*, September/October, 1.
- Foster, Sesshu:** *Two Classic Accounts of Anti-Nazi Resistance* [book review], May, 26.
- Gerson, Si:** *The Polk Murder – A Cold War Prelude* [book review], September/October, 26.
- Godwin, Greg:** *Neo-Conservative Ideas and Petty-Bourgeois Ideology* [pre-convention discussion], November 28.
- Grant, Bruce:** *Industrial Concentration* [pre-convention discussion], December 17; *Shop-Floor Democracy Enforces 'Pattern-Plus' at USX*, May, 10.
- Hall, Gus:** *Black-White Unity and the Working Class*, February, 2; *The Crisis of Capitalism and the Crisis of Socialism*, November, 1; *Charting a Renewed Workingclass Course*, August, 1; (with Tim Wheeler), *On CPUSA Electoral and Legislative Policy*, September/October, 9; *Petty-Bourgeois Ideology*, April, 1; *The Stark Reality of the War Crisis*, March, 2; *The YCL: Setting the Stage for a New Level of Struggle*, January, 2.
- Harris, Lem:** *Unemployed Movements in U.S. History* [book review], September/October, 24.
- Horne, Gerald C.:** *The Civil Rights Act of 1991: The Case(s) for Passage*, February, 18; *Kozol's Searing Indictment of Urban Education*, [book review], December, 15; *The New Right and the Judiciary* [book review], November 24; *Power, Politics and Hollywood* [book review], June, 24; *The Red Angel: A Riveting Biography*, [book review], September/October, 23.
- Index, 1991:** December, 26.
- Johnson, Ron:** *The Civil Rights Movement: Words and Pictures*, [book review], July, 21.
- Johnson, Timothy V:** *The Catfish Strike and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, January, 22.
- Keller, Charles:** *Oasis in the Dust-bowl*, May, 18.
- Kraft, Arnold:** *Herbert Aptheker's 'Abolitionism'*, January, 30.
- Martel, Harry (with Tony Monteiro):** *Marxism and Aspects of the New Thinking*, June, 1.
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- Miller, Prairie:** *Film and Cultural Imperialism*, March, 16.
- Mitchell, Charlene:** *The Fight for Socialism Includes the Struggle for Democracy*, February, 13.
- Monteiro, Tony:** *Criminalization of*

- African Americans: The New Face of Racism*, April, 4; (with Thomas Dennis) *The Pervasive Menace of Institutionalized Racism*, February, 5; (with Harry Martel) *Marxism and Aspects of the New Thinking*, June, 1.
- Murray, Mary C.:** *On the Urgency of Building Solidarity with Cuba*, November, 8.
- Myles, Dee:** *On the Tie Between Labor and the African American Community* [book review], March, 21.
- National Labor Commission, CPUSA:** *Free Trade Agreements – The Threat to Labor*, April, 16.
- Parenti, Michael:** *Media Distortion and the Gulf War Protest*, April, 13.
- Parsons, Howard L.:** *The Erosion of Original Intent* [book review], November, 21.
- Perlo, Victor:** *The Economic and Political Crisis in the USSR*, August, 10; *The Huge Lesson of a Small Victory* [book review], July, 24; *Monopolistic Accumulation and Transnational Expansion*, June, 10.
- Raineri, Vivian McGuckin:** *Marching in Sisterhood*, March, 6.
- Riskin, Ben:** *Behind the Free Trade Mask*, August, 19.
- Sims, Joe:** *On the Path to a Youth and Student Congress*, March, 9.
- South African Communist Party:** *Party Democracy*, January, 32.
- Stevens, Don:** *Better Read Than Red* [book review], May, 23.
- Tetekhin, Slava:** *Perestroika in the Soviet Union*, July, 9.
- Two Researchers:** *A Restrained Optimism Essentially Prevails*, May, 17.
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- Weisberger, Jon:** *Petty-Bourgeois Ideology: A Response to Gus Hall* [pre-convention discussion], July, 16.
- West, Jim:** *The CPUSA in the Fight for Equality and African American Liberation*, February, 25; *Refuting a Response* [pre-convention discussion], August, 28.
- Wheeler, Tim:** *The 1990 Election and the 102nd Congress*, January, 26; *Charting a Renewed Working-class Course*, August, 1; (with Gus Hall) *On CPUSA Electoral and Legislative Policy*, September/October, 9; *Washington Boils with the Politics of Crisis*, July, 1.
- Whitehead, Fred:** *Poets as Legislators of the World* [book review], April, 28.
- Zipser, Arthur:** *Those Anarchists: Sacco and Vanzetti*, November, 26.
- Zipser, Pearl:** *Rose Pastor Stokes: a Feminist of Her Day*, July, 6.

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