

# Defeating the Rightwing on the Road to Socialism

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## **Introduction**

I welcome you to our annual conference.

I also want to extend a special welcome to Comrade Ana Maria Prestes Rabelo of the Communist Party of Brazil (PcdoB). Comrade Ana, who is a member of the Central Committee and International Department, will be with us all weekend.

We look forward to her presentation later today, which I'm sure will give us a picture of a party that skillfully works in a very complex situation.

We thank the Communist Party of Brazil for making this possible.

Before I get into my report, which should be understood as a work in progress, I thought it would be useful to say a few words about the thinking behind this conference. One might assume that a conference in an election year would focus laser-like on the present political moment.

Such an assumption is both right and wrong. This conference will not ignore the elections to be sure, but it does at the same time have a grander design. It will connect the dots so to speak between our immediate and our longer-range political tasks.

Or to put it differently, we hope to connect the struggle at the ballot box today with the struggle for socialism tomorrow.

We have discussed this relationship before, but not enough and not to everyone's satisfaction.

Too many comrades ask: do we have a strategy beyond defeating right wing extremism that leads in the direction of socialism? Have we given up the fight for an independent political formation lead by labor and the racially oppressed? Is socialism still our goal? And, most importantly, how do we get to socialism from here?

## **Capitalism doesn't work**

Before addressing these questions, I want to make a case against capitalism.

Since its earliest days, capitalism has inflicted incalculable harm on humanity. Primitive accumulation, genocide, wars, slavery, ruthless wage exploitation, territorial annexation, racist, gender, and other forms of inequality - all this and more occupy prominent places in the history of capitalism.

And yet as ghastly as this is, the future could be even worse for a simple reason: capitalism's destructive power, driven by its inner logic to pump profits out the labor of working people, has grown exponentially compared to a century ago. Unless restrained and eventually dismantled, this power is capable of doing irreversible damage to our planet.

Consider some of the new dangers that make socialism necessary.

First is the prospect of unending war and mass annihilation. With the winding down of the Cold War, most people assumed that the war danger, conventional and nuclear, would ease. Subsequent events, however, have erased these modest hopes. The nuclear threat remains and imperialist driven conventional wars scar the landscape and brutally extinguish the lives of millions of people.

Another threat to humanity's future is environmental degradation. Almost daily we hear of species extinction, global warming, resource depletion, deforestation, desertification, and on and on to the point where we are nearly accustomed to this gathering catastrophe.

Our planet cannot indefinitely absorb the impact of profit-driven, growth-without-limits capitalism. Many scientists say that unless we radically change our methods of production and consumption patterns, we will reach the point where damage to the planet will become irreversible.

The earth is sending distress signals to its human inhabitants. And they will become louder still as long as the reproduction of capital dominates the reproduction of nature.

## **Democracy**

Still another danger is the many-sided assault on democracy and democratic institutions in the recent period, resulting from the rise of the national security state, capitalist globalization, the political ascendancy of the extreme right, and the invasion of corporate money into the political process.

At the epicenter of the struggle for democracy (and socialism) is the struggle against racism and for full equality. More than anything else it is corrosive of class and democratic consciousness and practices. It is an ideological underpinning of U.S. aggression and the "War against Terrorism." And it is a dagger in the heart of working class and democratic unity.

If the right wing gains in popularity and power it will be on the back of racism in the first place. The intensification of racism in words and deeds (including a wave of murders) in the wake of the 2008 elections is not by chance. It is the calculated policy of right wing extremists (including the GOP presidential candidates) who are desperate to beat the president at the polls as well as fatally fracture a people's movement that is growing in understanding, strength and unity.

The racist surge as well as the other attacks on democratic rights and liberties are exceedingly dangerous to our nation's future. But the role of the democratic movement is not to lament them, nor to cry that fascism is imminent. Its role is to fight more energetically to preserve and expand democracy and democratic liberties.

## **Shift in power on global level**

Still another danger is whether U.S. imperialism will peacefully accommodate to the rise of new competing powers and especially China. Or will it pursue a policy of maintaining global dominance by military means.

If history is any guide, there is ample reason to be concerned. The decline of dominant powers in the past (England for example) and the rise of new ones have brought in their wake war, instability, and even chaos in international relations.

No administration, including the present one, has shown any willingness to yield on U.S. primacy in world affairs. That doesn't auger well for the future.

## **It's the economy**

Finally, the economic engine of capitalism is sputtering. On a global level capitalism never worked for the majority of the earth's inhabitants. At its very dawn capitalism was divided into a core and peripheral zone. In the former the productive forces underwent periodic renewal, the working class grew, and living standards increased, while the latter produced primary materials, provided a source of cheap slave, languished in poverty and underdevelopment, and became a sink for destructive environmental practices of the developed world.

While the relationship between the core and periphery has changed, for example new dynamic centers of accumulation have emerged such as China, India, and Brazil, the majority of the world's people on the

periphery still live in poverty, disease and destitution.

These conditions of subordination, oppression, and exploitation are not by happenstance. They are structured into the economic and political relationships between the core and periphery, between imperialism and the countries of the South.

For a while it seemed as if capitalism in the first world was immune to its own worst excesses. Indeed, U.S. capitalism went through a phase of development in which employment, wages and benefits steadily climbed upward for substantial sections of the working class in tandem with economic growth rates and corporate profits.

It seemed as if capitalism's harsh features had permanently given way to steady growth, upward mobility, and broadly shared prosperity. The American Dream seemed to be within everybody's reach.

But to the surprise of many this "Golden Age" of capitalism didn't last. By the mid-1970s stagflation, rising unemployment and declining wages took hold. Over the next three decades the living conditions for working people deteriorated, thanks to neoliberal globalization, the takeover of the economy by nonproductive finance capital, and a right-wing-led ruling class offensive.

And with the Great Recession of 2008 the metamorphosis was complete. Working people in their vast majority found themselves on a fast moving treadmill. Some ran faster to stay in place, while many fell behind. Meanwhile, the 1 percent not only navigated their way through the Great Recession, but did so by enriching themselves many times over.

What is the upshot of all this?

Capitalism has morphed from a generator of jobs and rising income to a generator of unemployment, inequality, and insecurity. It is hard to imagine the restoration of a growth and employment dynamic and path that will provide plentiful jobs and rising income without a qualitative turn in the balance of class and social forces.

To make matters worse the extreme right is determined to pursue policies globally and domestically that will further impoverish working people - not to mention hasten the decline of U.S. capitalism.

I hope that the foregoing makes the case that socialism is not just a good idea, but an existential imperative - to preserve peace and our planet, to expand democracy, to eliminate gross racial, gender and other forms inequalities, and to provide a secure life for the billions living on this earth.

Thus, the overriding question is: how do we get to socialism? After all, there is no direct path. Socialism can't be hot-housed. It takes more than militant slogans.

If there were a straight and smooth path to socialism we would have taken it long ago.

## **Transitional periods**

In its formative period, the world communist movement had a disdainful attitude towards transitional forms and stages. The struggle for socialism was direct and compressed in time. It was damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead.

The operative slogans were "class against class," and "No Retreat, No Surrender."

But things didn't work out the way that those young militants believed. Revolution gave way to counterrevolution.

In the aftermath of this upheaval in the early 1920s, Lenin argued that the revolutionary process would stretch out over time and go through different stages, with distinct strategic tasks specific to each stage.

He further argued that the new communist parties must search for forms of transition to socialism, springing from a sober estimation of the level of class consciousness and the balance of class and social forces at a particular moment.

Unfortunately, Lenin died at a relatively young age and his advice was largely ignored. In fact, it wasn't until the 7th Congress of the Communist International in 1935 that this serious weakness of the communist movement was corrected. In his address to that gathering, Georgi Dimitrov, the famous Bulgarian Communist, said that the immediate strategic task was not socialism, but rather to build a broad working class led people's coalition to defeat the growing fascist threat.

Dimitrov ridiculed what he called "cut and dried" schemes that ignored the political situation and dynamics on the ground. He maintained that strategic and tactical concepts had to be fashioned to fit concrete reality, to fit a particular stage of struggle.

He argued that communists must shed simplistic understandings of the revolutionary process like class against class, skipping intermediate stages of struggle, and countering every demand of the social democrats with a demand that was twice as radical.

His report was at once an impassioned plea for a broad based alliance with the working class at its core and an insistent argument against "self-satisfied sectarianism," an attitude and practice that consisted of taking seemingly militant REVOLUTIONARY positions that were divorced from the concrete realities on the ground.

That was then. So where do we stand now? What is the path to socialism? What is our overall strategy?

## **Strategy and strategic policy**

Before attempting to concretely answer that question, I want to make some general observations about strategy and strategic policy.

To begin with, a well thought out strategy can make the difference between victory and defeat. Our party in 1930s, for example, changed its strategic policy in the mid 1930s (from class against class to the building of a broad working class led people's coalition against the economic crisis and fascism). In doing so, we enhanced our status and prestige, grew rapidly in size, and advanced the broader movement in innumerable ways.

By the same token, a wrongly conceived strategy can isolate the party and weaken the working class and people's movement.

A strategic policy is not an exact roadmap to the future, but a broad outline of where we want to go. It delineates to millions a path from one stage of struggle to another stage in the context of a larger revolutionary process.

It pinpoints the main social forces hindering progressive development, while at the same time identifying the main class and social forces that have an objective interest in moving society to a higher stage of struggle.

A strategic policy doesn't provide neat boundaries that seal off one stage of struggle from another nor does it adhere to a set timetable. In fact, it can take an agonizingly long time to complete.

Strategic policies don't grow out of thin air or moral outrage or our desire for revolution. Instead, it is determined by two factors.

One is an objective assessment of the level of social and economic development of a society; an anti-corporate strategy, for example, would be of little help to the revolutionaries of 1776.

The other factor is a concrete estimate of the balance of forces of all the social classes and groups in

society.

Finally, tactics (issues of struggle, forms of organization and unity, slogans, demands, etc.) flow from a strategic policy, not the other way around.

## **Road to socialism**

With the foregoing in mind, let me outline the main stages of struggle as our new program envisions them.

The first is the struggle against right wing extremism. This is not a new policy; it goes back to the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. At that point and since then it became evident that the main obstacle to social progress remains rightwing extremism and its corporate backers. They cast a reactionary shadow over the whole political process then and now.

The election of Barack Obama was a blow to the right, but subsequent events have demonstrated that it wasn't a decisive blow.

The right still retains considerable power, and initiative to frame the debate and disrupt the legislative and political agenda.

Its overarching goal this year is to regain control of all three branches of the federal government. How dangerous is that? In my view it would set the stage for a period of extreme rightwing onslaught.

If you don't believe me take a glimpse at Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio where rightwing Republicans took control of the levers of power in 2010 and then ruthlessly rolled back rights, eliminated social programs and attacked the labor movement.

Those actions are a harbinger of what the Republican Party would do if in command of the federal government next year.

By contrast, the decisive defeat of the right would weaken Wall Street and the entire corporate class, give leverage and momentum to the people's movement and clear the ground for an era that puts people and nature before profits and "free markets."

But that will happen only if an electoral coalition is assembled that includes the left, progressives, independents and moderates.

Said differently and dialectically, the defeat of the right at the polls next year cannot be achieved on a pure anti-corporate basis, given the existing relationship of forces. The 99 per cent versus the 1 per cent is a good slogan and representation of economic reality, but it doesn't reflect the actual political balance of forces on the ground at this moment.

The political complexion of the country is more complicated, thus making a broader strategy that reaches out to moderates (Republican as well as Democrats) and independents necessary.

Moreover, such a strategy if successful becomes the basis on which tens of millions will encounter a new relationship of forces, which, in turn, is the ground on which to move to a higher level of understanding and struggle.

None of this is to suggest that the Democrats aren't now or won't be in the future an obstacle to progressive change; in too many instances they are, but they aren't the main obstacle for the moment.

This election, then, is not about choosing a lesser evil. It is about our nation's future: are we going to move in a progressive-democratic or rightwing anti-democratic-authoritarian direction (I distinguish this characterization from fascism which has a particular meaning - the open terroristic dictatorship of the most backward sections of the capitalist class - in the communist movement)

Thus, the labor-led people's coalition, and Communists as a current within that coalition, must make every phase of the election process a number one priority.

The people's coalition must be a major factor in the primaries. It must reach, register and educate new and stay-at-home voters. It must guarantee a maximum voter turnout on Election Day.

No less important, it must unrelentingly expose the reactionary positions of the Republican candidates and their racist and anti-democratic systematic campaign to disenfranchise tens of millions of voters.

Not everyone shares this view. Some think the Democrats are as bad as the Republicans. Others go further and say that the Democrats are worse because they create popular illusions that change is possible within the two-party system. Still others say the electoral process is so compromised by corporate money that participating in it is a fool's errand. And finally there are advocates of running a third-party presidential candidate in this election.

I can understand these sentiments, but only up to a point. Like it or not, millions go to the polls in spite of their misgivings. They are invested in the electoral process. Voting is a sacred duty. And the Democratic Party is the vehicle of reform for tens of millions, the majority of whom are working and oppressed people.

What is more, labor will throw itself into the campaign to elect Democrats, moderate as well as progressive, albeit from its own organizational base. Four hundred thousand campaign volunteers are going to walk neighborhoods this fall.

Much the same can be said about the racially oppressed. Ditto women and seniors. The majority of youth will also take part in the elections, and like four years ago on the side of President Obama and the Democrats.

A third-party presidential candidate would only help the extreme right as well as isolate the left from the broader movement.

The two parties of the capitalist class have similarities. That is undeniable. But differences also exist at the level of social composition and political policies - policies that can be widened under the impact of a powerful people's movement, as they were in earlier historical periods.

The past three years have been frustrating to be sure; much the same could be said about the past three decades. But frustration and impatience are a poor excuse for a strategic and tactical policy in relation to the coming elections and politics generally.

Only a very sober and objective analysis should guide our thinking and actions. It is easy to imagine any number of electoral strategies, but the question is: which one is rooted in objective realities and advances class and democratic struggles? Which one positions the popular forces to go on the offensive in the post-election period? Which outcome will clear the ground of neoliberal policies and debris? Which one will weaken the corporate class as a whole?

To skip over the current stage in the name of militant radicalism may *feel* revolutionary, but in the end it is self-defeating and strategically misguided.

## **Anti-corporate stage**

The decisive defeat of the right in November will result in a different and far more favorable balance of forces. The fight for a people's agenda, the fight for an anti-crisis economic program will bring the labor led people's movement into loggerheads with corporate economic and political power.

Although the terrain of struggle will tilt in the direction of the broad democratic movement, no one should expect that the corporate class to retreat without a struggle.

Employing its considerable political, economic, and ideological power it will attempt to disrupt, divide, and

divert the people's movement in the short term.

In the longer term it will seek to regain the initiative and unrivaled political dominance.

Needless to say, it will get help from the mass media as well as breathe new life into the extreme right wing. And expect racism in new as well as old, open as well as veiled forms to continue as the corporate class attempts to reverse the election outcome, poison class consciousness, and divide the people's movement.

Only a closer alliance of a surging labor movement and its strategic allies - the African American people, Latino people, and other peoples of color, women and youth - have the wherewithal to turn back this corporate counterattack, while at the same time enact progressive measures such as public works jobs, living wages, economic conversion to peace time and green production, affirmative action, immigrant rights, housing relief, shorter hours, infrastructure renewal, expand democratic rights, etc.

At the same time, new forms of independent political action will continue to grow outside of the Democratic Party apparatus.

Indeed, as the anti-corporate struggle intensifies the contradictions and tensions within the Democratic Party will continue to grow given the multiclass class character of the party.

While pressures to break with the corporate elements in the Democratic Party and their program will surely surface, it is unlikely that any formal rupture will occur before this broad alliance exhausts every (or nearly every) opportunity to reform the Democratic Party, including converting it into a people's party.

Obviously we welcome the growing trends towards political independence. After all, it hard, if not impossible to imagine, any deep going anti-corporate reform unless the multi-racial working class, the racially oppressed, women, and youth (and their allies) have their own political formation.

Such a development in all likelihood would be combined with new forms of organization (Immigrant rights organizations and Occupy are examples of this phenomenon) and the growth and maturing of the left, not least the Communist Party.

This stage of struggle doesn't supplant capitalism, but brings the socialist stage closer as tens of millions become convinced in the course of struggle (experience is a great teacher; messaging, sloganeering, and agitation is not enough) that capitalism doesn't work for them.

Of course, objective conditions as well as unforeseen events will leave their mark on this bitter confrontation. Social change seldom follows a prescribed course. We envision a process of change, but not a process into which everything must fit; history is more multi-form than we can ever imagine.

Thus we have to anticipate novelty, that is, unforeseen turns and breaks in the political process.

## **The socialist stage**

The struggle for socialism is a complex process with no fixed timetable. Periods of advance yield to periods of retreat and vice versa. Shifting alliances form and reform with each side struggling to turn provisional allies into stable ones. New political understandings that accent unity, equality, empowerment, and anti-capitalism compete with ruling class notions that frame how millions understand the world, and the state becomes a contested battleground.

The opening stage in this process will see a substantial and sustained shift to the left among the core forces of social change (the multi-racial working class, people of color, women, and youth plus various social movements), a deepening of anti-racist (including anti-immigrant) consciousness and practice, growing support for an anti-crisis program, the further congealing of an anti-corporate alliance of social groupings, and the growth of the Communist Party and other left organizations.



This stage will culminate in the election of a people's government, based on a left and progressive majority at the polls.

The election of a people's government will mark the transition of the revolutionary process to a second stage. It will be characterized by a combined struggle inside and outside of government to implement the key policies of an anti-crisis program.

Of special importance at this stage are steps to control the movement of capital, to redistribute income from the wealthy to working people, and to place under democratic control sectors of the economy, such as finance, that are a threat to the people's government and socialist revolution.

At the same time, legislative initiatives to counteract the grip of a small number of monopoly conglomerates on the capitalist mass media will be of critical importance. A more diverse pattern of ownership and control in the print, broadcasting, film, telecommunications and web-based media would mirror the wide range of interests and aspirations in a modern, democratic society.

So there is no misunderstanding, it should be said that a people's government does not mean that the entire capitalist state and its personnel are now on the side of a fundamental transformation of society.

Therefore, the state itself will become a focal point for sharp class and democratic struggles. In the early going, the people's government will have to introduce extensive changes in recruitment, staffing and management policies within the diplomatic services, government agencies, the judiciary, the police, the secret services and armed forces for the purpose of replacing key personnel with supporters of the government's goals.

It will be vital to secure the widest possible public support for these steps, including in mass referendums, while continuing to extend and deepen democratic rights, improve the living standards of working people and other non-corporate strata, and reduce racial, gender, and other inequalities.

New bodies of working class and popular power, if history is any guide, are likely to arise in the course of these struggles.

This thrust by the new government will almost certainly meet the most determined resistance from powerful sections of the capitalist class and its forces within and outside the state apparatus. (Unlike other countries we can worry less about outside interference militarily and economically because of our dominant position in world affairs and the likelihood that we will not be the first to make this transition.)

Thus, enormous confrontations will occur, signifying that the revolutionary process has entered its third and most crucial stage as tens of millions come to the realization that capitalism is the problem. In the course of these confrontations - not least in the electoral arena - the question of who controls the state will be decided - the corporate- finance capitalist class or the working class and its allies.

Much will depend not only on the balance of forces in the state and in society as a whole, but also on the sustained mobilization of tens of millions to uphold the people's democratic will and to respond in a timely way to any acts of sabotage.

In the course of this process, the constructive involvement of the labor movement in general and the public sector trade unions in particular will be essential.

For many reasons (the sanctity of life, the terrifically destructive weaponry that exists, the lasting wounds that are left in the aftermath of an armed engagement, etc.) the socialist movement seeks a peaceful path. The extent to which this is possible will depend the scope of the popular mobilization and the ability of the socialist movement to minimize the capacity for resistance of the capitalist class, *including the utilization the slightest divisions in its ranks*. As the working class and oppressed invariably bear the brunt of counter-revolutionary violence, it is the duty of the socialist forces to devise such a strategy, rather than propose simplistic notions of violent insurrection and armed struggle.

At one time, we envisioned a narrowing of the movement from the anti-corporate stage of struggle to the socialist stage. There was a grain of truth here, but only a grain; probably some social strata will peel away as the dawn breaks on socialism, but at the same time, the overall movement must be gaining in breadth and depth. It must be winning ever more millions of people to its banner, including those who were formerly politically passive or a part of the opposition bloc.

Therefore, any notion of the transition to socialism as a purely working-class affair or a project of just the left should be rejected. Only a movement of the great majority and in the interests of the great majority, only a movement whose mass character deepens again and again, is capable of winning socialism in our country.

## **Political rupture**

Even when a political rupture occurs, it will be neither complete nor irreversible. On the day after the transfer of power, socio-economic life will probably look much like it did the day before and power will continue to be contested.

In such circumstances, as important as the battle of ideas is, it is also imperative to continue to enact measures to weaken the class adversary, while at the same time taking steps to expand the rights of tens of millions, and enact people driven economic measures.

It is also imperative to win bigger majorities in subsequent elections.

Thus, revolutions are not a single act, but rather a series of events and complex processes stretching over time.

## **Nationally specific path**

Nor are revolutions imitative. While there are clearly some common features, this transformational process can happen in a variety of ways; one size doesn't fit all.

In considering forms of transition to socialism, we should be unabashed proponents of our own nationally specific path.

While we should study the experiences of other countries, those experiences should not imprison our political imagination.

If I were to write a book on our own country's path to socialism, I would make the particular features a main thread, not an addendum. For example, given the democratic sentiments of the American people and given the powerful impact of race and gender on the politics, economics, culture, consciousness, and historical trajectory of our nation, our vision of socialism must include an unyielding commitment to completing the unfinished democratic tasks that we will inherit and expanding democracy, beginning with the eradication of racism and male supremacy.

Even the slightest devaluing of democracy or the fight against racism and gender oppression will keep the socialist movement on the political periphery.

## **The Communists and the left**

We also have to anticipate that multiple parties and movements will be a feature of the U.S. path to socialism.

That said, I would argue that our party has a unique role both now and in the future.

Our embrace of a theory of society and social change that is historical, ecological, dialectical, comprehensive and independently elaborated - without shortcuts, simplifications or official boundaries.

Our affinity to the American radical/democratic tradition.

Our use of class analysis and categories in a way that is broad and unifying.

Our focus on the real needs, struggles and interests of the working class and people.

Our commitment to equality and internationalism in their various forms.

Our determination to assist (and lead) in the building of a broad people's movement at the core of which is the multi-racial working class, people of color, women, and youth.

Our understanding of the special (central) place of the struggle against racism in the fight for social advance and socialism.

Our disposition for action, but not any kind of action, but united action along a specific strategic and tactical path.

Our accent on social processes and contradictions.

Our conviction that the multi-racial, male- female working class and its organized sector play a decisive role on the path to social progress and socialism.

Our refusal to confuse slogans and militancy for analysis.

Our insistence on making a concrete presentation of every question.

Our belief in the necessity of a broad strategic perspective.

Our use of flexible tactics that unite and move forward the labor led people's movement

Our appreciation of the interconnection between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism.

Our ability to stay clear of false oppositions between partial and more advanced demands, between gradual and radical change, between electoral forms of action and direct action, between patriotism and anti-imperialism, between struggle against the state and struggle within the state, and between anti-capitalism and rifts in capital.

Our insistence that the electoral/legislative arena grows in importance as we move down the road to socialism.

Our belief that popular majorities make change.

Our vision of Bill of Rights socialism.

Our confidence in the democratic and revolutionary character of the American people.

I could go on, but I think my point that our party is unique and necessary to the revolutionary process at every stage.

## **What will it will look like**

Socialism USA will not be drab. It will have a modern and dynamic feel, celebrate the best traditions of our nation, and give patriotism a new democratic content.

It will bring the social and democratic into the heart of our government, economy, media and culture.

It will complete the unfinished democratic tasks left to us by capitalism.

It will expand the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.

Our socialism will embrace people-centered values - in place of profit-centered values - as we overcome divisions of class, gender, race, ethnicity and sexual preference.

It will encourage new social arrangements to care for the very young and the very old.

U.S. socialism will insist on the separation of church and state, but it will also assume that people of faith and non-faith will be active participants in society.

It will also bring an end to exploitation of wage labor, not in one fell swoop, but over time.

A mixed economy operating in a regulated socialist market and combining different forms of state, cooperative and private property will define the economic landscape.

Such a mixture of ownership relations and market mechanisms does not preclude economic planning or a national investment strategy.

Finally, socialism will give priority to sustainability and sufficiency, not growth without limits.

## **A bigger Communist Party**

I would be remiss if I ended this report without appealing to you to build the Communist Party and Young Communist League in size and influence. We are too small to be sure, but the good news is that we are growing.

Still we could grow faster if we went about it more deliberately and concretely. After all, people like what we do and say.

A good measure of this is the thousands of people who "like" us on Facebook. As of last week, 20,000 liked us on the People's World page and 18,000 liked us on the Communist Party page.

And in both instances, the number steadily grows week by week.

Here is a pool of possible new members if we work at it. Plus there are the hundreds of people in mass movements who appreciate our role and if approached right might well join the Party.

What a difference that would make in our ability to bring to life our strategic policy both now and in the future!

Can we do any less?