



Plant fire kills 25 in North Carolina

Outrage is spreading against Imperial Food Products. It owns the chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina where a fire killed 25 workers and injured 55 more on September 3.

Workers and anti-racist activists have organized pickets at Imperial's headquarters in Atlanta and at its plant in Cummings, Georgia. Meanwhile, over 300 people marched on the Hamlet plant on September 9. The protesters declared that this was not just some tragic accident, it was murder.

This was murder!

There was no reason for workers to die in this fire. They fell victim to smoke inhalation only because they could not get out of the fire exits.

Imperial had padlocked fire doors from the outside. Most victims were

Profit system is the murderer

found piled up at fire exits or at freezers where they had fled after being unable to escape through the exits.

Workers report that Imperial systematically locked the doors in the name of preventing the stealing of chicken nuggets that are made at the plant for fast-food restaurants. Apparently Imperial is more concerned about a few chickens than the safety of its workers.

As well, workers report that the cause of the fire itself was the unsafe conditions created by Imperial's productivity

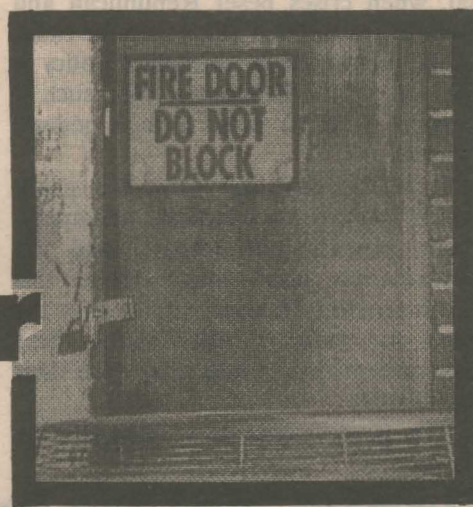
drive. In order to save production time, maintenance crews were routinely forced to leave burners on under frying vats while they replaced hydraulic hoses. On September 3, one of those hoses erupted during maintenance work. The hydraulic fluid exploded when it hit the burners.

Profits, not workers' lives, are the bottom line for the capitalist exploiters.

The government is also responsible

But Imperial is not the only one responsible for this industrial murder. The government is just as much to blame.

The factories of Imperial Food are classified as "high hazard" work places. And in 1983, the Hamlet plant was closed for several months because of a similar fire in the same vat. But in the 11 years of its operation, the plant has



never had a safety inspection by the government.

North Carolina's labor secretary admitted that such a tragedy was inevitable sooner or later because of the shortage of funds and safety inspectors. North Carolina is one of 23 states that have opted out of federal inspection from OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). They operate their own safety programs but are supposed to follow guidelines from OSHA. It has only 12 to 16 work place safety inspectors, although federal guidelines would normally require about 64 such inspectors.

Officials have admitted that an average work place will only be inspected once

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Drug war an excuse

U.S. backs war on poor of the Andes

The scourge of drug abuse persists without letup.

It is no mystery why drug addiction runs rampant. America's inner cities are dying ghettos of hopelessness. People ground down by poverty, joblessness and loss of all hope turn to drugs both to escape their gritty reality and to finance survival. They are a natural prey for the wealthy drug dealers who make fantastic profits out of human misery.

Cheap rhetoric against drugs abounds. But the truth is, the system has no solutions to curb the drug plague. What is needed are policies to rebuild lives and rekindle hope among the ruined masses, but what the politicians and government offer is the "war on drugs" — an unworkable "law and order" solution to social collapse. Instead of jobs, education, freedom from desperation, the capitalist establishment in America only offers arrests, jails, and police brutality against the poor, the workers, and the minorities.

Thousands of miles south of us, there

is also an international dimension to the U.S. "war on drugs." And it is just as insane and criminal. Under the pretext of fighting drugs, the U.S. government is steadily expanding its military presence in the Andean countries of Latin America — Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. In 1990, more than \$141 million in military aid went to the armed forces of these countries. Hundreds of U.S. Green Berets have been sent to Bolivia and Peru. More have been promised in recent months.

In the rural areas of the Andes, peasants grow the coca plant from which cocaine is produced. They do this out of the same desperation which drives poor people to become street hustlers for the drug trade in New York or Detroit. The economies of the Andean lands have

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See DRUG WAR

See back page for coverage of Peru and Bolivia.

A small nuclear cut, giant war budget remains

On September 27, George Bush said in a TV speech that he is ordering a reduction in the U.S. nuclear arsenal. He ordered worldwide withdrawal of all U.S. ground-based, short range nuclear weapons. (The arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons remains untouched.) There is also to be the removal of all nuclear-tipped cruise missiles and bombs from ships and submarines. (Strategic nuclear missiles will stay on submarines such as the *Trident*, as will conventional cruise missiles on ships.) He also declared plans to negotiate new cuts in long-range nuclear missiles.

Any cuts in nuclear weapons are a welcome step. For over 40 years, the world has been living under a huge threat of nuclear destruction, either through their deliberate use or even accidents. The world's nuclear powers — the U.S. foremost among them — have the capacity to destroy the world many times over.

However, we can hardly pour the champagne because of George Bush's announcement. Washington and its loyal media are making his plan out to be something which it is not. Three reasons for our reticence.

■ Much of what is being cut is old technology which is due for the scrap-heap anyway. Even Sweden's new incoming Prime Minister, a conservative, can see that. Carl Bildt said, "Large parts of this arsenal are both technically and tactically antiquated. It is to a large extent about weapons from the 50's and 60's, which lost their value a long time back. They no longer have a military value." They were not destroyed so far only to maintain the balance of terror with the Soviet Union, but that reality has changed dramatically with the end of



the Cold War.

■ Bush is making some small cuts, in order to avoid demands for more serious cuts. For example, there are already demands from arms control groups for big cuts in long-range nuclear warheads, for example, down to 1-2,000 by the year 2000. Far from ordering such a cut, Bush isn't even proposing talks towards such cutbacks.

■ And finally, the real demand among the people is that the military budget be drastically cut back. While the Pentagon stuffs its face, the working and poor people are being starved and squeezed

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See NUCLEAR

Canadian workers on strike



Federal workers storm Parliament Sept. 27. See p. 6-7 for articles.

Why states and cities ravage the people

Below we report on the attempts by the state of Massachusetts and the city of Chicago to shift the burden of their budget crises onto the workers and poor. These are but two of the endless list of federal, state and local government budget crises. When a problem is universal, when crises beset Republican and Democratic officials alike, then the cause cannot merely be the misguided policy of this or that officeholder. No, such a general problem must have a general cause.

It is the capitalist drive for profit which has created widescale unemployment, poverty and despair. And the governments don't stand above this profit-seeking. They serve it. So while the need for massive relief stares these governments in the face, they wash their hands of it.

The governments have been shifting

the tax burden further off their capitalist masters and onto the "little people." And meanwhile the taxes do not go to meet the needs of the working people and the poor, but are just a giant fund to be used to subsidize the rich or carry out their projects. Detroit debates how much money to give the rich baseball owners for a new stadium, while the homeless are left to shiver. Massachusetts and Michigan debate how many more hundreds of millions to give the corporations, while closing schools and slashing social programs. An apparatus of cops, courts and jails is built up to enforce the privileges of the wealthy, while people are forced into acts of desperation to survive. The federal government shifts more and more of the money for health care and relief onto the bankrupt states, while it spends hundreds of billions for weapons to defend the oil companies and

prop up a world empire. And there is the outright plunder of hundreds of billions of dollars to bail out the S&L scam artists and the banks.

But why should the downtrodden accept this state of affairs? Sporadic protests and demonstrations have broken out to fight the cutbacks. The governments will take notice when these actions change from isolated affairs to a big movement of the oppressed. When they see the working people become contemptuous of the slightly different priorities of the different establishment parties. When they see the streets fill with a self-confident movement of the workers in their own interest. Remember, it was only powerful mass struggles that won what social benefits have ever existed for the workers and poor.

And while fighting to survive today, consideration should be given to alterna-

tives to the present system. We need not band-aids, but preventative care. We must consider the need for a revolutionary change of society that will reach the problem at its roots. A change that will rid us of the capitalist parasites and put the working class in a position to shape society to meet its needs. A change that will eliminate the division of society into rich and poor, master and wage slave, privileged and ignorant, and instead substitute a communist society of equals. Only then will the powerful forces of modern industry and modern science and mass organization truly be able to serve the needs of the masses. Only then will progress be not another source of layoffs and budget crises, but an inexhaustible benefit for the people as a whole. ■

Banks get fat while Chicago schools close

Chicago Public Schools opened on time this year, but at the price of further serious cutbacks in education, and with teachers prepared to strike in October if the school board insists on withholding the 7% raise promised them in their contract.

The conditions of public education in Chicago are already atrocious. Classrooms are overcrowded; children are not getting the help they need and are entitled to; many graduate high school without really knowing how to read or do arithmetic, etc.

Now look at the new cutbacks the politicians and the bankers have forced onto the Chicago school children and teachers. About 500 teaching positions have been eliminated and 861 other jobs have been wiped out. Thirteen schools are being closed with only one week's warning. Summer school is being eliminated for all special education students. A reading program for the disadvantaged is being eliminated even though everyone knows that Chicago public school children lag far behind in reading. Home school bus pickups have been cut even for kindergartners. And, as mentioned above, the 7% raise for teachers has been canceled.

So why are all these drastic cuts being imposed? To make up for a huge deficit in the school budget which Superintendent Kimbrough "discovered" immediately after Mayor Daley won re-election. All

through the summer Kimbrough proposed one drastic cut after another, all summer there were protests against these proposals. The loudest protests were from parents, teachers and community people against the proposal to close 26 schools and combine 36 others. This forced the school board to back down on these closings on July 26.

However, soon afterward the School Finance Authority demanded that the school board close these schools and cut programs or else it would shut down the whole school system. This School Finance Authority is a committee of capitalist financial experts which was set up in 1980 after a financial crisis. Its purpose is to assure that the school budget is managed so that the money loaned to the schools by the big banks is repaid on time and with all interest due (and to hell with the educational needs of the children). In late August the school board and the NAACP made meek proposals to use a little of the money set aside for the bankers and other school board creditors for education instead. But the School Finance Authority would have none of this.

Meanwhile Mayor Daley showed his loyalty to the banks and the rich when he applauded the latest drastic cuts by the school board. "It's amazing what can be done when it has to be done," he gloated, showing that he could care less about public education so long as the

budget is balanced.

When it comes to finding the money to pour bombs and bullets by the millions on Iraq for the greater profits of the oil corporations, the American political system has no trouble finding the money. But for educating the children of the poor and the minorities, all of the capitalist politicians, from President Bush to Republican Governor Edgar and Democratic Mayor Daley have the same attitude: they spout rhetoric while cutting

the actual funding. If teachers could be paid with politicians' hot air, they would be rich. However, the reality of the situation is that the working people must build their own movement to defend the education of their children. We need to demand more funding for education and that the rich should be taxed to pay for it.

(Based on the September 13 "Chicago Workers' Voice.") ■

Budget cutting in Mass.

In Massachusetts, one of every ten workers is unemployed and looking for work. For black workers, the ratio is one out of four. As unemployment rises, more and more people are forced onto welfare.

So what is Governor Weld doing? He slashed welfare payments by six percent this year and has vetoed a general relief appropriation. Budget cuts have also led to gross understaffing of welfare offices. The staff of the Grove Hill office revealed, during a protest against understaffing, that an average social worker there is handling the cases of over 250 families. This overwork translates into further suffering for the needy who must battle their way through the red tape of an overburdened bureaucracy to get

benefits.

Meanwhile, Weld and the state legislature are plotting ways to undermine the health benefits of state and Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority workers. State workers have suffered wage freezes and benefits cuts for over three years now, but the politicians want more out of their hides. The legislature recently vetoed Weld's efforts to shift 25% of health insurance costs onto the employees — but it failed to appropriate enough funds to cover the current health plans. Now Weld is trying to force reduced coverage and increased deductibles and co-pays onto the workers.

(Based on the Sept. 6 "Boston Worker," paper of the MLP-Boston.) ■

Throwing the working class youth out of college

Last month, the trustees at the 28 state universities and colleges in Massachusetts announced increases in student fees for the fall semester. They ranged from 14% to 134%, making fees higher than tuition at several colleges and universities (fees and tuition are two separate charges). This is after several years of tuition and fee hikes, including a 6% increase in tuition for this fall. And it was just a few short years ago that annual fees at state schools were running around \$200.

To make matters still worse, \$100 million was cut from state education funding and \$58 million was cut from the state's scholarship fund. Responsibility for this rests with all the capitalist politicians and state education establishment. The current hysteria to provide a good climate for business and for the Wall St. speculators means that the poor and working class youth's education can go to hell as far as the powers that be are concerned.

The situation is so bad that professors and administrators at some state schools

are raising questions about maintaining "some semblance of quality" in the face of such cuts. Some of them protested along with the students when Governor Weld traveled to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for the groundbreaking at a new \$50 million polymer research lab. There's money to help out the corporations with R&D, but not for students. Weld claimed to be equally concerned about higher education, but the protesters knew he was lying and shouted him down.

The rich don't have to worry: they can send their kids to any school that will take them. But workers who want to educate their kids or themselves will have to take on an extra job, if one can be found, work harder, and go deeper into debt. That is the reality today. Let's follow the example of the University of Massachusetts protesters and take to demonstrations and protests. Let's build up a fight against education cuts and tuition and fee hikes!

(Based on the Sept. 6 "Boston Worker," paper of the MLP-Boston.) ■

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Bush denounced around the U.S.

Across the country, Bush met a dual audience in September. There were the privileged paying hundreds of dollars to see him, and the people out in the streets denouncing him.

AIDS activists target Bush

Over 1,000 people marched through Kennebunkport, Maine on September 1 to protest Bush's callous attitude towards AIDS victims, while Bush was lounging at his resort home in the town. Demonstrators demanded adequate housing and health care for people with AIDS. As well, they condemned the Bush administration's half-hearted attitude in funding research on AIDS.

Bush responded by denouncing AIDS demonstrators for interfering with business as usual in his "ancestral home." Why, a few local merchants had decided to shut down on "the best weekend possible" for business. Bush, who encourages anti-abortion fanatics to disrupt the clinics and hospitals that offer health care for women, believes that AIDS activists don't have a right to be seen or heard. He fanned the flames of bigotry by trying to shift the blame for the AIDS crisis onto the victims. The standard conservative line is that AIDS only afflicts evil people, so let them die. As Bush put it: "Here's a disease where you can control its spread by your own personal behavior. You can't do that in cancer."

The September 1 protest was the beginning of a series of actions scheduled by AIDS activists for the month. The campaign, led by ACT-UP, is to culminate with a march on the White House on September 30. Another demonstration the next day will call for national health insurance.

Police beat anti-Bush protesters in Philadelphia

Thousands of people came to denounce Bush when he appeared at a September 12 fundraiser for the Senate campaign of Richard Thornburgh. 700 Republicans gorged themselves at a \$1,000-a-plate dinner to praise Bush, who had recently blocked the extension of unemployment insurance payments for workers impoverished by months of joblessness. But on the streets, the people were angry. ACT-UP staged a "die-in" as a form of civil disobedience, others



1,000 AIDS activists denounce Bush in Kennebunkport

demanding abortion rights, and unemployed workers demanded "Lay off Bush!"

The Philadelphia police pushed into the lines of protesters outside the hotel, beating people and smashing news cameras. They manhandled demonstrators and arrested a number of people. This was how the Philadelphia police implemented Bush's calls in mid-August (*New York Times*, August 17) and early September to prevent "excesses" in demonstrating, that is, to prevent anyone demonstrating against Bush's agenda.

Bush denounced in L.A.

400 people denounced Bush on September 19 at a rally outside the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles where Bush was present at a posh Republican fundraiser. Supporters of the Marxist-Leninist Party took part on the streets and distributed *The Workers' Advocate* and a leaflet declaring "Bush slaps the unemployed in the face" and "Don't expect relief from the Democrats." High school students from South Pasadena marched and shouted slogans and distributed copies of the first issue of their newsletter *8 to 3: high school prison notes*. And ACT-UP formed the bulk of the militant part of the protest. Their leaflet denounced "George Bush's lies and criminal negligence in responding to the AIDS crisis." They made things hot for reactionaries such as the right-wing followers of anti-gay crusader Rep. Bill Danne-meyer.

Croatians also present

Besides the left-wing demonstration, there were also 300 Croatians present

who wanted Bush to intervene against Serbia in the fratricidal bloodshed in Yugoslavia. They were led by diehard anti-communist forces who really have no idea why there is such bloody national strife in the now-disintegrating country of Yugoslavia. But there were some ordinary Croatians present who took MLP literature.

When there was actual communist organization among the Yugoslavians, the working people of different nationalities united against the fascists who sought to enslave them in World War II. But when a state-capitalist society was built in Yugoslavia, under the revisionist banner taken up by Tito, the basis was created for the economic crisis and nationalist hatreds that are now breaking out in full force. The initiative of the working people, as well as the right to self-determination of the nationalities, was trampled on. Western capitalism will not solve this problem born of capitalism and of revisionist-style state capitalism. ■

Anti-war forum in Los Angeles

About 200 people attended a forum on U.S. war crimes in the Gulf War on Sunday, September 15 in Los Angeles. The barbarous nature of Desert Storm was denounced. There were first-hand reports of the devastation of Iraq by U.S. and allied bombing and other massacres. This meeting was organized by the Coalition against U.S. intervention in the Middle East as testimony for "The Los Angeles Commission of Inquiry for the International War Crimes Tribunal."

However, while the speakers showed the cruelty and slaughter in the war, many promoted the United Nations as the institution that represented an alternative to war, as the institution that can deliver peace and justice to the people of the area. Since the war crimes were carried out in the name of the UN, and the American military draped itself in UN resolutions, this meant covering up for the imperialist system responsible for the slaughter. ■



Bush lays foundations of 'New World Order'

New York *Newsday* reported on Sept. 12 that in the first hours of the ground war, the Pentagon buried thousands of Iraqi troops alive with army plows.

Anti-war doctor court-martialed

The military is still lashing out against those soldiers who opposed the Gulf war. This time they struck at Captain Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, a 40-year-old mother of three who was a doctor in a medical unit. They convicted her of desertion and sentenced her to 30 months in prison. This felony conviction may also cause her to lose her license to practice medicine.

Huet-Vaughn was called up for active duty on December 26 as part of the preparations for the Gulf war. Soon afterwards, she left her unit in Fort Riley, Kansas and issued a statement condemning the bloodshed that the U.S. war buildup would lead to. She also spoke out at anti-war rallies and in the media. This noble and honest stand is why the military brass hates her. They are punishing Captain Huet-Vaughn for her outspoken anti-war activity more than anything else.

The army is making an example of Huet-Vaughn and other military resisters. They want to terrorize the soldiers so they won't oppose mass slaughter on behalf of U.S. big business. But the example of Yolanda Huet-Vaughn may backfire on them. Upon receiving her sentence, she declared: "I don't regret the [anti-war] position I took. It was an avoidable war, and there are children in

Iraq that cannot rejoin their families in 30 months." Her courage may encourage the growth of anti-war sentiment among the rank-and-file soldiers, and all militant workers should support Huet-Vaughn and other GI resisters. ■

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On the Detroit plan for all-male schools

As the school year was about to open, a sharp controversy broke out in Detroit.

In the name of helping black male students, the school board planned to start three male-only elementary academies. With the special programs being offered, many parents supported the plan, and over 1,200 applied to get their boys into the 560 slots available at the academies.

But other parents opposed them because they discriminate against girls and could set a precedent to turn back the laws against school integration.

Facing this opposition, the school board eventually voted to establish an

all-girl academy some time in the future. But such so-called "separate-but-equal" systems have long been shown to discriminate against the oppressed. This plan did not satisfy the critics, and the issue went to the courts.

On August 15, U.S. District Judge George Woods ruled that single-sex public schools are unconstitutional. A temporary compromise was worked out that would allow up to 130 girls into the three academies. But Wayne County Commissioner Bernard Parker, and other supporters of the all-male academies, campaigned against girls applying and threatened at least one of the parents

who originally brought the law suit against the all-male academies. As well, the school board voted to continue to fight for all-male schools in the courts. Under this pressure, only about 30 girls applied for the academies.

The controversy in Detroit is part of a larger fight that is brewing. Sex-segregated classes, and even race-segregated classes, have begun or been planned in Baltimore, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Dade County, Florida and Ann Arbor, Michigan. And President Bush, in the name of encouraging "choice," has supported them. Although all of these programs are being launched in the name

of helping disadvantaged black youth, it is the oppressed minorities who will ultimately be hurt by them. Instead of improving education for the vast majority of the oppressed, these programs are an opening shot to turn back the laws requiring integrated schools and equal education for all.

Below, we carry articles from the Detroit Branch of the Marxist-Leninist Party which oppose the all-male academies in Detroit and call for a fight for better schools for all.

A few elite schools won't solve the problems facing young black men

Fight for better schools for all

The problems confronting young black men in this country are horrifying. Unemployment and poverty, racism and police repression — this is their everyday life. Right now one in every four young black men are languishing in prison or serving parole or probation. Clearly, this society is offering them little beyond a life of crime and jail or serving as the army's cannon fodder for rich men's wars.

The Detroit school board claims it has a "new, innovative approach" to deal with these problems. But it is hard to see how the creation of three special all-male academies will help the masses of young men.

Oh yes, these elementary schools may help the kids lucky enough to attend them. After all, they have been given extra supplies, special limits on class size, additional attention to curriculum, extra training for the faculty and staff, tutoring programs, special mentoring services, after-school sports programs and more. According to court testimony, the school board has spent an extra \$1 million for just these three academies.

Certainly, if such extra resources were provided to all the 176,000 students in the Detroit school system, then we could expect some improvement in education. But the school board is offering the extras to only about 600 students. And to get these crumbs, we are supposed to accept the backward step of male-only, sex-segregated schools.

The school board never even considered making the same kind of improvements in the rest of Detroit's schools. Why? Because that would require confronting the wealthy corporations and rich people who have benefited from tax breaks while Detroit has suffered cut-backs in funding, schools and programs for years.

The workers and poor in Detroit deeply want better education. Indeed, they have several times voted to increase their taxes for school improvement. But Detroit schools are still way underfunded compared to the rich school districts. And the budget slashers — from Mayor Young, to Governor Engler, to President Bush — offer no real change in the situation.

Indeed, Engler and Bush's "choice" programs would take more from the poorer schools in the name of offering bonuses to "successful schools." Obviously, most underfunded schools serving disadvantaged children cannot compete with the wealthier schools on the standardized tests. But Bush and Engler would strip money from those schools not doing as well on the tests and give it to the "successful" schools that show improvement on the tests. This is not "choice," but just another way to rip off the workers and poor.

Yet Detroit's Superintendent of Schools, Deborah McGriff, and the

school board president Lawrence Patrick Jr., both praised Engler's "choice" plan to the skies and declared it is "in line" with what they are doing in Detroit.

The school board is not really confronting racism, as they claim, or offering help to the majority of hardpressed young people in Detroit. They are simply creating a handful of elite schools. These schools may give a few young black people a leg up in schooling, but they

The Detroit school board, in justifying the all-male academies, has repeatedly claimed that its only aim is to "concentrate on helping young black men" and to cut down the number of dropouts. But it has yet to explain why that aim requires segregating off the girls and excluding them from the extra help and programs the academies offer.

Although the board won't say so explicitly, the implication of their all-male program is that the girls are the real problem to educating boys.

Now everyone knows that it is not girls, but poverty that is the major cause of drop-outs. Just this spring the Children's Defense Fund came out with another study showing that poor teenagers are three times more likely to drop out of school than other teens. In Detroit — where the average per capita income is below the official poverty line and only 49% of the suburban level — poverty is one of the main problems that must be addressed. Yet the school board seems to complain that since more males are dropping out of school the girls must be the problem.

But the girls are suffering too. While 54% of males dropped out last year, the school board admitted under questioning in court that some 45% of the females also dropped out of school. And when you look at the overall question of oppression, black women are really suffering the most. There are not only more teen pregnancies — but with the growing poverty and with the laws against welfare paying for abortions — today women frequently cannot get prenatal care and there are increased infant deaths. As with the men, black women can't find jobs. But for them it's even harder since frequently they need child care to be able to work. And if they are lucky enough to land a job, they get paid less than black men (and far less than white men). What is more, the women face sex discrimination, rape, and other abuse from men.

Obviously our young black women need improved education just as much as the young men do. But more, we need an education system that teaches respect for women and defense of their rights. Segre-

gating the boys into all-male schools only increases the alienation towards girls and implies that they — not poverty, racism and deteriorating schools — are the problem. This implication was not lost

Today, Mayor Young and Governor Engler and President Bush are slashing jobs, job training, and other social programs needed by our young people. The Supreme Court has gutted protections against racism, and discrimination in jobs and housing is soaring. And our schools continue to deteriorate while the school

board plays around diverting money to a handful of elite schools. A fight to help our young people, a fight to really make a change for the better, requires a fight against the wealthy budget-slashers who run this country. The workers and poor must get organized to make the rich pay for education and jobs for all of our youth.

Are girls the problem?

gating the boys into all-male schools only increases the alienation towards girls and implies that they — not poverty, racism and deteriorating schools — are the problem. This implication was not lost

on one 10-year-old boy who said on the opening day of school, "It should have been all boys. Girls get you in trouble." Is this really what we want to be teaching our young people?

Why is Bush backing all-male schools?

On September 9, President George Bush declared his support for the all-male academies in Detroit. And he called for changing the laws against segregation to make such schools legal.

Now Bush is no friend of the black people. He vetoed civil rights legislation and backed Supreme Court rulings that give a green light to job discrimination. He launched the so-called "war on drugs" which — while not stopping the plague of drugs — has led to increased jailings of minority youth and the turning of entire poor neighborhoods into virtual police camps. He slashed job programs, unemployment and other social programs which have hit the oppressed minorities especially hard. And as part of the Reagan administration, he supported giving tax breaks to private racist academies.

Obviously if Bush is supporting the Detroit plan, we should not expect it to really be of much help to young black men.

What Bush sees in the Detroit plan is a precedent. If the plan is eventually legalized by the courts, or the laws are

changed to allow the plan, then the door is opened for discrimination against women in our public educational institutions. Bush's crusade against abortion rights, maternity leave, and so forth has shown he is opposed to women's rights. And sex-segregated schools is right down his alley.

But more. If sex-segregated public schools are legalized, then it is a small step to legalizing race-segregated schools. And this is just what Bush is after.

The capitalist ruling class, which Bush represents, is on a vile racist crusade. They are trying to turn the clock back to the days of Jim Crow-segregation and racist terror against the black masses. Racist oppression means more profits for the capitalists. But more, it means splitting up the working class along racial lines and further weakening the workers' ability to fight exploitation and the capitalist take-back offensive.

Although the plan for all-male schools is said to be aimed at helping young black men, it is actually helping Bush and his racist crusade.

What's wrong with integration?

To justify sex-segregated public schools in Detroit, black nationalist rhetoric is being thrown up to bad-mouth the decades of mass struggle waged for integration.

Typical are the arguments of Jawanza Kunjufu. He is a Chicago educator and the author of "Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys" who is being

cited as an "expert" in support of the Detroit plan. "I think people have to catch up with the times," Kunjufu declared. "John Hope Franklin, Ben Hooks, all the other people, they felt that school integration would improve academic achievement of African-American chil-

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DOWN WITH RACISM!

Are civilian review boards the answer to police brutality?

The recent wave of police shootings of minority youth in Boston has evoked a lot of anger among the poor and minority masses. These murders come in the wake of the Carol Stuart murder scandal, the police policy of strip searching young black men on the streets, and the videotape of L.A. police beating Rodney King.

The anger has reached the level where people are talking about fighting back. There are beginnings of a mass movement against racism, police brutality and poverty. After each of the recent police murders in Boston, families and neighbors have organized protest marches. And in the case of Hector Morales the youth battled police for three nights. Mothers of slain children are no longer crying alone, but are beginning to get together to support each other and to

organize protests against the system.

In this situation, politicians in Boston and other cities are proposing to establish civilian review boards to control the police. The question arises: should we get behind any of these proposals, or should we build an independent mass movement against police repression, racism and poverty? *Boston Worker* is in favor of the latter.

The civilian review board plans do not change the basic policy of the wealthy ruling class that really controls the police. Anyone with eyes can see that the rich are maintaining their profits during the crisis of American capitalism by pushing down the workers and the poor. And minorities have received the worst of it, with conditions in American ghettos heading towards the terrible situation in many third world countries. In this

situation the rich, from Bush to Congress to Mayor Flynn, have adopted a policy of more and more police repression to deal with every social problem. If poverty is generating crime, shoot the poor. If the homeless are filling up the parks, send the cops to beat them up. The civilian review boards that are being proposed will not change this basic policy.

The idea of bringing the police under the control of the people, instead of vice versa, is a good one. But that is not what the civilian review boards being proposed by the politicians are about. Boston City Councilwoman Rosario Salero put it quite succinctly when she said civilian review boards were a small price to pay for restoring public confidence in the police. In other words, what is being

prepared is another layer of whitewash. None of the three review boards proposed in the Boston City Council would be elected by the communities where the police do the most damage. They would all be appointed. They would not hold public hearings in the community. They would just be another institution to play around until the heat died down and then slap the cops on the wrist.

What is needed is not reliance on the promises of the capitalist politicians. What is needed is to build mass active resistance in the communities, in the streets. That is the only way working people have ever won any improvements in any capitalist country.

(Based on Sept. 6 "Boston Worker," paper of MLP-Boston.)

Black people bear the brunt of job elimination

Despite President Bush's complaints about so-called "reverse discrimination," rampant job discrimination against black people is still the rule in racist America. And recent studies prove it.

Last hired, first fired

The July issue of the *Monthly Labor Review* carried a study on the results of the last recession. And, although the author refused to even mention the word "racism," its findings show that "last hired, first fired" remains the lot of black people.

The study was of people 20 to 60 years old who had lost their jobs from 1979-1986 due to "a plant closing, an employer going out of business, a layoff from which he/she was not recalled, or other similar reasons."

It showed that layoffs hit hardest in manufacturing and in the lower occupations. Since black people held proportionately more jobs in industry and proportionately more jobs as operators, fabricators and laborers, they suffered the most job losses. For example, 53.1% of the black men and 44.7% of black women were displaced from these jobs, compared to 34.6% of white men and 35.4% of white women.

Of course it could be argued that this is just the tragedy of economic crisis, not planned racism. But then what are

we to make of the statistics on the rehiring of the laidoff?

The study showed that blacks were less likely than whites to be rehired after a recession. "Fewer than two-thirds of black men were reemployed...and only slightly more than one-half of black women were reemployed." As well, the disparity between black and white reemployment took place "despite similarities in predisplacement characteristics." That is, blacks were less likely to be rehired, despite a similar number of years on the job, education, or occupation they previously held.

As well, "Blacks experienced significantly more weeks without work than did whites." And "long-term joblessness -- that exceeding 26 weeks -- was more prevalent" among black people than the whites who were studied. For example, from 1984 to 1986, some 37.8% of the black men and 29.5% of the black women were unemployed 26 weeks or longer compared to 18.8% of white men and 22.4% of white women.

Of course, the discrimination against black workers took place against the backdrop of worsening conditions for all workers. For example, the *Monthly Labor Review* reports that earnings declined for all groups of workers -- black and white, male and female -- who eventually found other jobs. "Approximately 35-40% of

reemployed workers were earning less than 75% of predisplacement earnings." The study said this was due to the loss of higher-paid manufacturing jobs and the increase in lower-paid trade and service jobs.

Rampant job discrimination

Another study shows the rampant job discrimination going on today.

The Urban Institute investigated who was hired when equally qualified white

and black people applied for jobs. In the cases it studied, the Institute found that similar applicants were treated differently one quarter of the time. And when this took place, a black job applicant was three times more likely to be denied the job than a white. (*U.S. News & World Report*, July 22)

Obviously, all of President Bush's hysteria against "quotas" and "reverse discrimination" is just a cover for the racism against blacks and other minorities.

INS cracks down on immigrant workers

This summer the immigration service has stepped up fining employers who accept fraudulent documents as proof of immigrants' "right to work." It is also fining anyone who makes, buys or uses fraudulent documents.

The news media is whining about the problems this causes the capitalist bosses. But we are concerned with what this means for the workers. Undocumented workers face fines ranging from \$250 to \$5,000. This is a big sum for workers making the minimum wage or less. It also means they face increased risk of deportation and more trouble finding any job, never mind a decent job. For anyone who looks or sounds foreign, the 1986 immigration law has already increased discrimination in hiring, even according to the government's own studies. Now with stronger enforcement, discrimination is increasing by leaps and bounds. Some employers have even been asking workers to present documents that the law does not require.

For other workers, this is a campaign to turn them against their fellow workers, who have every right to live and work here whether they are "legal" or "illegal." Capitalism and imperialism are what force the massive immigration of workers. But then the capitalists give the immigrants no rights at all, forcing them to accept the lowest wages and worst working conditions. They superexploit the immigrant workers and then use this superexploitation to try and drive down the wages and working conditions for all workers.

All workers should oppose the increased attacks on our fellow workers. We need to unite to fight for an end to harassment of all immigrant workers, documented and undocumented. Unite to fight for more and better jobs for all workers. And unite to fight for an end to capitalist exploitation and imperialism.

(Based on Sept. 13 "Chicago Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-Chicago.)

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done. It has not."

This brilliant analysis seems to have missed one little fact -- the schools have never really been integrated. According to recent studies, 63% of black youth still go to predominantly minority schools and 33% are in intensely segregated schools -- these with 93% or more black students.

Such is the situation in Detroit where the school system is 90% black. To integrate these schools would have required confronting the whole system of segregated white suburbs surrounding Detroit. But neither Ben Hooks and the NAACP nor Mayor Young and the whole civil rights establishment were willing to wage that fight.

It is not integration that failed but, rather, there has been a failure to inte-

grate. The problem with the civil rights leaders is not that they stood for integration, but that they have not fought for it hard enough.

Of course integration, by itself, did not promise quality education. As long as this society is divided into classes, into rich and poor, then there will be elite schools for the wealthy and inadequate schools for the working people. But integrating the schools would mean bringing together the children of black and white workers, breaking down racist prejudices, and helping them unite against their common exploitation. For the workers, the fight against racism and inequality is essential to improve the situation for the oppressed minorities. But more, it is essential to unite the class for the struggle against the system which holds down the majority for the profits of a wealthy few.

NUCLEAR Continued from front page

try in today's America. However, Bush is not proposing any serious cuts in the war budget.

Far from cutting back on militarism, Bush is only reorienting overall U.S. war plans. The possibility of war with the Soviet Union is mighty slim, but the U.S. war planners are preparing more assaults in "regional conflicts" in the third world. Wars like the recent ones in Panama and Iraq Wars like the "dirty wars" currently developing in the Andes in Latin America. And in order to wage these wars, the U.S. will maintain its nuclear arsenal

because it is a powerful weapon of blackmail.

As long as the system of imperialism remains, so will the threat of war. U.S. research on new, devastating weapons continues. And the Persian Gulf war showed that the Pentagon has hopes in a new round of conventional weapons that it regards as potentially almost as destructive as nuclear ones.

Only the working people, not the capitalists and generals, will seriously curtail militarism. It won't be handed down to us. And to end militarism altogether, we have to build a revolutionary movement that will replace the capitalist system altogether.

Canadian workers fight for job security

Workers in Canada are hitting the streets in big struggles for job security. Unemployment is officially 10.6%, and it is higher in the urbanized eastern areas. Montreal has the highest jobless rate of any large city in North America. Southern Ontario — the heavily industrialized area from Toronto to Windsor — has been hit hard. Throughout Canada some 300,000 jobs — one-seventh of all industrial jobs — have disappeared in the last two years.

While laying off their regular workers, employers are more and more hiring part-time employees. Part-timers are paid lower wages and no benefits.

The spreading industrial unemployment also puts pressure on service and public sector workers. Government administrators are trying to follow private-industry managers and bring in part-time employees at the same time that they are laying off regular, full-time workers.

In the articles that follow we examine recent struggles of public-sector workers for job security. It should be noted that wages are also a major issue in these strikes. The Conservative Party administration of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has demanded a wage freeze from federal workers. Mulroney not only wants to freeze government workers' pay, but also set a model of wage restraint for the private sector. At the same time Mulroney gouges all workers' paychecks

with his hated GST, the regressive Goods and Services Tax. The GST is a national sales tax; it adds 7% to the price of all consumer goods and many services, and is in addition to provincial sales taxes.

Canadian workers are on the move against the double-barreled capitalist attack of unemployment and wage restraint. ■

Federal workers walk out second time

On September 27 federal workers organized in the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) walked off their jobs, resuming the strike they had carried out for a week and a half in mid-September. In offices and work stations across Canada, workers walked out at noon. Later the same day thousands of them in Ottawa stormed Parliament Hill and overran police barricades. Parliament was forced to adjourn early, and Prime Minister Mulroney was hustled out a freight elevator to a back door.

As we go to press, it is not clear how long the federal workers may stay out. But one thing is clear: the workers are very angry at the government's continued refusal to negotiate.

Lively actions mark strike

In their earlier strike, in mid-September, PSAC members surprised the government by organizing successful mass actions. Strikers set up picket lines at all kinds of government facilities — office buildings, garages, airports, hospitals, army bases. Plenty of people turned out to man the pickets at all hours.

Ottawa's government buildings were covered with colorful signs like "Loiselle a la poubelle" ("Loiselle to the trash can") — Loiselle "the Weasel" is the head of the government's Treasury Board and the head of negotiations with PSAC.

Picketers carried signs saying "Honk if you hate Mulroney," and got a day-long response of blaring horns.

Strikers organized mass rallies in a number of cities. In Halifax, strikers blocked downtown streets. In Montreal, mass pickets shut down federal buildings. Daily rallies were organized in Ottawa. The biggest came on September 16, after Mulroney introduced harsh back-to-work legislation into parliament. Some 20,000 marched on Parliament Hill.

Surprising impact of strike

Mulroney's administration was taken aback by the impact of the strike. Previously PSAC had been known as a conservative union of civil servants. It had never before organized a strike. In negotiations this year Loiselle treated their representatives with contempt, refusing to budge from his offer of a 0% wage raise. The government predicted the strike would flop.

But soon the politicians were forced to eat their words. Some 70,000 PSAC members stayed out on strike, with a big impact on the economy. All government functions — customs, passports, tax collections, weather forecasting, air travel, shipping — slowed to a trickle.

Air traffic controllers are classified as "essential" employees and are not legally allowed to join the strike. But controllers in Toronto refused to cross picket lines. This forced Air Canada to shut down and forced the cancellation of many other flights at Toronto's main airport.

PSAC members work in agriculture as grain inspectors, weighers and samplers. Grain handlers and dock workers respected their picket lines, and the result was the complete stoppage of grain

shipments.

Customs officials are also classified as "essential." Customs agents showed up for work at the border but carried out an extensive slowdown, causing long traffic jams at checkpoints in Windsor (across from Detroit) and Fort Erie (across from Buffalo). This was multiplied many times over when a group of independent truckers took up the cause of the federal workers and blockaded the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. Besides supporting the PSAC strikers, the truckers also protested the government's deregulation of trucking and the Goods and Services Tax.

The truckers' blockade effectively sealed off the Ambassador Bridge. Shipments of auto parts between Canada and the U.S. were choked off, and auto plants in Ontario soon began laying off workers. The last day of the strike some 6,000 auto workers were sent home early due to parts' shortages.

Thus, the federal workers' strike became a rallying point for mass hatred against the Mulroney administration. Mulroney himself was dogged by angry strikers at every public appearance.

PSAC workers — largely women, many poor

Mulroney's contempt for the PSAC employees has a decidedly sexist edge to it. Half of PSAC's 155,000 members are women. And 75% of the lower-paid positions — clerks, secretaries, etc. — are occupied by women. Many of these are single mothers, and many are actually below the poverty line. A major demand of the strike was for pay equity for women, to adjust upwards the salaries of these lower-paid employees. But Loiselle refused to even discuss it.

The strikers are also demanding a pay raise for all PSAC members, and COLA. Some 60% of PSAC's members make between \$17,500 to \$22,000 American. Loiselle is demanding that the workers accept a wage freeze for this year. But with inflation at 6%, that means a loss of some \$1,300 American for the average employee.

Workers are also demanding an end



Striking federal worker denounces the few scabs who crossed the picket line.

to layoffs and better job security. So far this year 1,800 have been laid off, and the government is contracting out more and more work.

Workers were angry that the government, while demanding sacrifice from poor clerks and secretaries, awarded members of parliament a raise of 4.2% this year. Loiselle himself got a raise of \$15,000!

After the first strike, the government agreed to return to negotiations with no preconditions. But it soon reneged on this, and continued to insist on a wage freeze. The only concession offered by Loiselle was to give a \$500 signing bonus (one-time lump sum) to the lower-paid employees. Workers denounced this as a joke, especially after word leaked out that Loiselle was planning to give large year-end bonuses to government appointees.

Workers must beware of a sellout

As of late September the PSAC strike is on again. But recent actions of the PSAC leaders cannot inspire confidence.

In the first place, the PSAC leaders

were very slow to call the workers out on strike. They deliberately stalled announcing the strike until after the postal workers had gone back. And they still refused to call it until after workers had begun walking out themselves in wildcats. Splitting the two strikes — PSAC and CUPW — damaged both of their chances for victory.

Secondly, the PSAC leaders caved in quickly to the threat of back-to-work legislation, pleading for a resumption of negotiations and calling off the strike in the meantime. Presumably they will do so again. And Mulroney is poised to push his legislation through parliament as soon as possible. While the NDP leaders had earlier postured against this legislation, they have offered to help him in this second round, promising they will help get the bill through in 48 hours.

On the other hand, because the strike has activated rank-and-file workers, they have the possibility of exerting some influence on the outcome. If they take the initiative and make their own stands heard over the bureaucrats, they could ensure a militant mass struggle. This would put them in the position for the best outcome. ■

Toronto transit workers block hiring of part-timers

Workers for the Toronto Transit Commission struck for one week in mid-September, shutting down the second largest transit system in North America.

Toronto Transit carries about 1.5 million riders daily on buses, trains and subways. All these passengers had to find alternate routes to work, school, etc. as the 8,600 drivers, maintenance workers, and fare collectors of TTC stayed out on strike. Metro Toronto was awash in huge traffic jams for a week. The TTC workers struck during the height of the first federal workers' strike.

Workers refuse to accept part-timers

The major issue in the strike was management's attempt to hire part-time workers. Regular employees saw this as an attempt to break the union, to undermine the regular career workforce and create divisions among the workers. Part-timers would be paid lower salaries than full-timers and would have little or no benefits.

TTC workers have been fighting against the hiring of part-timers for years. In 1989 workers went on a 45-day

work slowdown to protest management's plan to hire 450 part-timers. Management was stymied.

But management came back this year, at contract time, with a new proposal. They would hire just 80-85 part-time employees. These would only be used during the summer months, when other workers went on vacations. And those hired would be retired TTC employees.

Management thought they could sneak this by the workers. And they got the local union leadership to recommend

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See TORONTO

Militant strike by Canadian postal workers

From the U.S. media, one would hardly know it, but our neighbor to the north was recently gripped by a nationwide postal strike.

At the end of August 46,000 employees of the Canada Post Corporation struck, seriously disrupting mail delivery to the entire country. The postal strike encouraged a vigorous spirit in the September strikes by the federal workers and Toronto transit workers.

Workers in militant actions

From the start, the postal strike was marked by militant actions. The clerks and carriers, members of CUPW (Canadian Union of Postal Workers), threw up mass pickets around postal facilities. Fierce battles erupted on several picket lines as police tried to force their way through. In some cases hundreds of workers fought the police and management goons.

Management went all out to smash the strike. They got court injunctions banning all pickets in Toronto. They flew scab workers and mail into distribution centers via helicopters, to get around the pickets. They even tried hiring motorcycle gang members as scab delivery personnel.

With their post offices shut down by mass pickets, management tried to set up emergency scab distribution centers. But striking workers soon found out about them. In many cities these too were hit by mass pickets. In Montreal the workers formed hit-and-run "demolition teams" which completely wrecked dozens of the centers.

Widespread public support

Despite the inconvenience of not receiving their mail, most Canadians sided with the postal workers, as public

opinion polls showed. The strikers' demands were widely seen as just, and other workers sympathized with them.

Government leaders tried to portray the workers as greedy, and that their strike would only victimize the poor. But the strikers thwarted this attack by volunteering to deliver pension and welfare checks during the strike, on unpaid time. At first management refused to allow this. They insisted that pensioners and welfare recipients should come down to their scab distribution centers to receive their checks. But when people did, they had to stand in line for hours, and even then their check was often not there. So management was forced to relent, and allowed striking carriers to home-deliver the checks.

Strikers demand a full-time work force

The strike's major demand was for a completely full-time work force. In recent years Canada Post has been hiring more and more part-time workers (with fewer benefits) and casual employees (with no benefits). Management uses this cheaper labor as a divide-and-rule tactic. And this policy threatens the livelihood of all full-time employees. It is estimated that if Canada Post converted all its part-time and casual positions to full-time positions, it would be forced to hire 3,000 full-time workers.

Other demands of the strike were: an end to contracting out postal services; an end to harassment; restoration and expansion of postal service; a wage increase of 19% over four years; and a COLA adjustment.

To see workers hit the streets demanding a full-time work force and job security is an eye-opener for workers in the U.S., especially postal workers. Here the

leaders of the postal unions tell us management has the right to hire tens of thousands of casual employees, at the same time that management is eliminating full-time jobs and threatening layoffs. The union leaders tell us nothing can be done, that "it's in the contract." And then, when contract time comes around, they say, "Well, it's an established precedent, so we just had to give in and allow them to hire more casuals."

The demand against harassment is also refreshing. Postal workers here are constantly being harassed by management, and it never occurs to the union leaders to take up an organized struggle against it.

Of course it never occurs to the postal union bureaucrats here to take up an organized struggle for anything at all. "Our hands are tied," they say; "we don't have the legal right to strike as CUPW does." If a right is not handed to them on a gold platter by the capitalist politicians, they cannot imagine struggling for it. In actual fact the postal workers established a de facto right to strike in the nationwide strike of 1970; but afterwards the union bureaucrats sold out this right in order to ensure a cozy position within the state-recognized bureaucracy for themselves. And they won't even organize a serious campaign to win the legal right to strike.

CUPW calls off strike at a crucial point

This is not to say that the leaders of CUPW are determined militants. On the contrary.

First of all, the CUPW leaders restricted the strike to a rotating strike. This means that the workers in a local go out for a few days, then go back to work while those in another locality go out. This is supposed to be less of a burden for the strikers. But it also makes

the strike much weaker, and the CUPW leaders designed it as a compromise with management.

Secondly, the CUPW leaders called off the strike after six days while they went back to negotiations. This disrupted the strike just when it was beginning to take hold.

After three days, the strike was resumed. And by this time workers in some localities, notably Montreal and Toronto, were fed up with the rotating strikes. They decided to go out indefinitely, regardless of instructions from above.

At this point the government threatened to pass back-to-work legislation. Without even waiting to see such a bill introduced in parliament, the CUPW leaders hurriedly agreed to call off the strike and accept mediation. This took the pressure off the government, and allows the mediator to take his sweet time. This is doubly traitorous when it is considered that the Canadian federal workers organized in PSAC were just about to launch their nationwide strike. The CUPW leaders knew this, and had pledged to support their strike. With CUPW and PSAC both out at the same time, the Mulroney administration would have been in deep trouble. But the CUPW leaders hurried their members back to work.

The return to work was ordered without a vote by the membership. And it was done even without an agreement from management to cancel punitive measures taken during the strike. Thus, 42 members fired during the strike remain discharged; this includes the president of the Toronto local.

Thus, the strike only went so far. Nonetheless, it will have a definite impact on what the mediation award will be or in the workers' determination to fight again if their concerns are spurned. ■

TORONTO Continued from prev. page

acceptance. But the workers voted it down anyway. The workers know that once management gets its foot in the door, as at Canada Post, it is very difficult to slam the door shut. Workers were also suspicious because TTC has been threatening to lay off some full-time employees. Layoffs of full-timers combined with hiring of part-timers! Workers could see the direction this was going, and were determined to stop it.

NDP undermines the strike

After a week with its transit system shut down, the business interests in Toronto were demanding an end to the strike. They put pressure on Ontario's Prime Minister, Bob Rae, to bring it to conclusion.

Rae is the leader of Ontario's New Democratic Party, the social-democratic party of Canada. The NDP pretends to be socialist and receives political support from the Canadian Labor Congress. The NDP won provincial elections in Ontario last year.

But though ostensibly a party of labor, the NDP is always ready to serve the capitalists. Rae threatened to pass back-to-work legislation that would ban the strike and fine workers and their union. The only alternative was to accept a settlement, and Rae invoked a seldom-used law to force the workers to vote on TTC's last offer.

While this offer dropped the attempt to use part-timers, on other concessions it was almost identical to the one workers already had turned down. In a stormy union meeting before the required vote, workers railed against Rae, the NDP, and the local union bureaucrats for selling out the strike. A number of workers

demanded the resignation of the union's entire executive council, and then stormed out. Outside, one worker echoed his comrades' sentiments: "If Bob Rae legislates us back to work, we should ignore him and Mulroney too. The whole country's on strike. PSAC and CUPW should come out too."

Many workers felt the same way. But the workers were disarmed by the betrayal of the labor bureaucrats of ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) and the NDP, and they weren't prepared to carry through the struggle on their own. The next day TTC's last offer was accepted by a vote of 60% to 40%.

Mass struggle wins a round

The TTC strike made some important gains for the workers. In the first place, it was TTC's first strike in over a decade. It signaled that the transit workers are not going to remain quiet while the government runs roughshod over them. TTC workers showed their willingness to stand up beside other public sector employees. The contract they won gave them annual wage increases of nearly 5% a year for two years, clearly breaking through Mulroney's model of wage restraint.

Most important, the workers defeated management's attempt to bring in part-time employment. The final settlement allows management to use maintenance workers as drivers, on voluntary overtime, during the summer months. And it puts further restrictions on the number of maintenance personnel who can go on vacation during the summer. But management is still not allowed to bring in part-time workers. The TTC workers have won another round in the battle for job security. ■

Anti-racist actions in Canada



1,000 people marched against racism in Halifax in August.

Workers and young people in Canada are also taking up the struggle against racism. In the present economic crisis many Canadians are becoming more and more sensitive to racist attacks and to attempts on the part of the government and rich to scapegoat the poor and minorities.

In Montreal's impoverished East End, the government has been trying to foment racist attacks against African refugees. In July a Montreal policeman murdered a black man in cold blood. But the masses are not letting this go by without a struggle. There have been two demonstrations of hundreds to protest the racist murder. These rallies were attended by whites as well as blacks, and also by representatives of the Mohawks who waged a determined struggle for minority rights at Oka two years ago.

There was also a recent anti-racist

rally in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Some 1,000 people came out in support of anti-racist activists who had been attacked by police. The young activists had been set upon by police while they were protesting the discrimination practiced by Halifax night clubs. ■

MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

■ CHICAGO
1631 West 18th Street (one block east of 18th St. 'L' on Douglas line)
Phone: 243-5302
■ OAKLAND
3232 ML King Way (old Grove St.),
Oakland, CA 94609
Phone: 653-4840

Defend women's rights!

Family leave — watered down again

Working class families have a crying need for maternity and family leave laws. They are necessary so that pregnant workers do not face the threat of being fired or of having to work through their pregnancies. They are necessary to care for newborn children and to deal with family emergencies. And there must be paid leave so that these situations do not bring financial ruin.

In 1990, Congress passed a weak family leave law. But Bush said it would impose on business and vetoed it. So Congress watered down the bill yet more, and is scheduled to vote on this new bill.

Like the old bill, the new bill requires employers to provide up to 12 weeks of leave and guarantee workers their jobs back. And like the old bill, this is unpaid leave, so many workers won't be able to take advantage of it.

Yet more. The new legislation, like the old, does not apply to work places employing under 50 workers. This means that only 5% of the work places employing 40% of the work force would be covered.

Other provisions are worse than last year. With respect to part-time workers, the new bill would cover only those working at least 25 hours a week as opposed to the old bill's standard of 20

hours a week. This eliminates coverage for, say, another 2% of workers. Another new provision would allow companies to exempt the highest-paid 10% of the work force. All in all, only 28% of the work force is covered.

Employers will also be able to deny leave if a worker does not give 30 days notice for "foreseeable absences." As well, it appears that if an employee is unable to return to work following a leave, the employee can be forced to pay the company back for part of the cost of health insurance.

For all its faults, the bill will help some workers a bit. But its paltry nature shows what a cynical attitude Bush and Congress have to the problems of working class families. They are full of talk about "family values." And they are quick to blame poverty and desperation on the supposed lack of moral values of the poor. But when it comes to providing the most basic social measures — such as pregnancy leave, health insurance, or child care — the more they talk, the less they do. And the reason is not hard to find. They are oh, so much for the family values of the workers — so long as it doesn't interfere with the family profits of the capitalists. ■

800 rally against the gag rule

800 activists rallied for abortion rights on September 14 at the capital steps in Lansing, Michigan. They came to denounce the Bush administration's gag rule which prohibits doctors at federally funded clinics from giving poor women information about abortion. And they came to denounce Michigan's Senate Bill 141, the latest in a series of anti-abortion measures being pushed through the legislature by "right-to-life" Governor Engler.

Senate Bill 141 requires doctors to show pictures of fetuses to women seeking abortions. And the doctors must explain in detail the worst possible scenarios of abortions going wrong, despite the fact that, in the vast majority of cases, abortion is safe under normal clinical conditions. (In fact, according to a study suppressed by the Reagan administration, women are 17 to 25 times more likely to die in childbirth than during an abortion.)

The bill also requires women to wait an additional 24 hours and make a second appointment before obtaining an abortion. In Michigan, women can obtain abortions in only 21 of the 83 counties. So a second appointment is costly and time consuming for women living in rural areas, away from the major cities, and it would be impossible for many poor women. Of course that is the whole point of the legislation, not to provide medical information to women, but to deny them abortions.

At the rally, NOW and their invited speakers called on the activists to vote Democratic and lobby congressmen. As

if the Democrats were more than half-hearted on abortion rights, or that the Democratic-controlled Michigan House would block anti-abortion measures!

Meanwhile, the religious crusaders of Operation Rescue picketed on the outskirts of the rally. Some militants in the rally started shouting slogans against the "right-to-lifers" and drew more and more people into the confrontation. NOW harangued activists from the platform not to get involved. Whether at clinics or rallies, it is NOW's view to just ignore the "right-to-lifers," to avoid even eye contact, and hope they'll go away on their own or that the police will take care of things.

But OR's picket line, with its giant posters of bloody fetuses and placards calling women who have abortions "murderers," was intolerable to a number of demonstrators. They shouted down OR with slogans like: "Operation Rescue go away! Women's rights are here to stay!" and "Right-to-Life: your name's a lie! You don't care if women die!" The ten OR picketers panicked, and then quickly retreated, followed closely at their heels by angry pro-choicers who pursued them with slogans and raised fists until they were well away from the rally site.

Scores of demonstrators crowded around the MLP literature table to talk about the need to confront the "right-to-lifers" and militantly defend the clinics. Many stood in line to get on the sign-up sheets for Detroit clinic defense. And hundreds of copies of *Detroit Workers' Voice* and *The Workers' Advocate* were distributed. ■

Congress opposes gag rule, but agrees to parental notification

The Supreme Court recently upheld the Reagan/Bush policy of forbidding any medical personnel at federally-funded health facilities from even talking about abortion. (See June 1 *The Workers' Advocate*.) There was immediate out-

rage against this censorship. Soon Congressional Democrats and some Republicans proclaimed they would rescue women from this new assault on their rights.

Generally Congress has shown little stomach to stand up to the Bush admin-

istration's shredding of abortion rights. But the "gag-rule" went too far. First the House and now the Senate have passed measures overturning it. But even in so doing, Congress made concessions to the anti-abortion forces.

The Senate bill requires clinics to notify parents when a minor seeks an abortion. Apparently, the notification process can be bypassed if a "licensed counselor" certifies that notifying a parent would result in emotional or physical damage to the young women. But many teenagers, especially disadvantaged girls, would not be able to use this bypass. In any case, this provision chips away at abortion rights. It won't strengthen families, but simply harass young women.

Who really wants safe medical care for women?

Over 30 pro-choice activists confronted an Operation Rescue (OR) picket at Botsford Hospital near Detroit on Saturday, September 21. The pro-choice forces set up a counter-picket with banners and placards blocking the "right-to-lifers" signs. They shouted slogans and received many signs of approval from cars driving by.

The anti-abortion crusaders of OR claimed a woman died after an abortion at Botsford Hospital earlier this year. But

In addition, the bill bows to anti-gay bigotry. An amendment by arch-reactionary Jesse Helms scrapped plans for a survey on teen sexual behavior. It was designed to compile information for AIDS prevention. But according to Helms, the survey would only "support the left-wing liberal argument that homosexuality is normal." For Helms, only lynch mob hysteria is normal, and ignorance is the ultimate weapon against disease.

There is another problem as well. It is not clear if Congress will be able to override a probable Bush veto.

One thing is clear though. The defense of women's rights cannot be left to the windbags in Congress. ■

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al Board voted to "neither condemn nor condone" the coup. This stand was based on hopes for the success of the coup, but the party wanted to hedge its bets in case the coup would not succeed. After the coup collapsed, Hall told the *New York Daily News* that he agreed "with the intent but not the method of the coup."

However, Gus Hall's stand met vocal opposition. Another wing of the leadership has aligned itself with Gorbachev. A number of CP leaders have publicly criticized the actions of the Gus Hall leadership as "a shamefaced apology for a reactionary, illegal and indefensible act." An acrimonious National Committee meeting on September 8 split in about half over a resolution criticizing the National Board's decision to "neither condemn nor condone the coup." The opposition in the CP likes Gorbachev because it prefers the social-democratic model of reformed capitalism to the traditional state-capitalism of the Soviet bloc. There is also a cynical element of using the division over the Soviet crisis to force a change within the CPUSA itself.

The Soviet crisis is clearly a major

issue in the CP's present crisis. But it coincides with several other questions. On none of these issues, however, do the critics represent anything with revolutionary or communist positions. There is no argument over the essentially reformist framework in which the CPUSA has long been submerged.

There are complaints about the bureaucratic regime within the CPUSA itself, but the more fundamental fault line is over what type of reformism to practice in the U.S. The Gus Hall faction would like to simply carry on with its old politics of maintaining a CP carrying favor with the liberal-labor bloc of the Democrats and the AFL-CIO. The others, among whom are the main black leaders of the CPUSA, feel this is a dead-end road towards irrelevance. They would apparently like to submerge themselves more heavily into Democratic Party politics, without the CP's traditional politics as awkward baggage. These forces see their fellow black liberals get City Council/Mayoral/Congressional seats and their mouths water. They would like to get in on that gravy train while they still have some years of active life ahead of them.

A battle royal is shaping up for the CPUSA's convention this December. ■

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pressure operators to disregard speed limits in order to make up time. They are notorious for working train operators over long hours in open violation of federal regulations for safety-sensitive jobs. And the training period for operators is now down to six months from 18 months not too long ago. Today they are even talking of bringing charges against the conductor on the accident train for not taking control from the motorman. Meanwhile, these same bosses are pushing to completely eliminate conductor jobs and institute "one person train operation." What safety hypocrites our managers are!

Safety and the public good demand a

stop to the speedup of transit workers, shorter work hours (especially for operators), and a real failsafe system. But all we're likely to see is drug testing. Now, no one in their right mind would stand for operating a train or performing other sensitive work while impaired. But this is definitely not what random drug testing aims at. Such tests determine use at some indeterminate time in the past, not present impairment. The record also shows that testing inaccuracies have ruined the jobs and lives of hundreds of workers, including transit workers.

But such tests give the authorities a chance at an easy way out when tragedy occurs: blame the workers and cover up until the next accident.

(Excerpted from Sept. 16 *New York Workers' Voice*, paper of MLP-NYC.) ■

Strikes and workplace news



Solidarity Day 1991

More than 200,000 workers marched on Washington, D.C. August 31 in "Solidarity Day, 1991." The march included contingents of workers from the Ravenswood Aluminum Company in West Virginia (locked out of their jobs and replaced by scabs), militants from the *Daily News* strike in New York City, auto workers fighting layoffs from McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach, California, striking Greyhound drivers, Delta Pride catfish workers from Mississippi, and machinists from Boeing in Seattle, Washington. And a large group led by Boston school bus drivers marched with a banner demanding a nationwide one-day strike.

The workers came out to demand national health care for all and to protest against Bush and the capitalist takeback offensive on the masses. They came to unite and build for bolder mass struggles against the capitalists. Unfortunately, the union leaders who headed up the march were not so bold. Their speeches concentrated on promoting imperialist chauvinism and support for the Democratic Party.

The mass protest gave a feeling for the potential strength of the workers if they but push aside the sellout union bureaucrats and mount an independent, rank-and-file struggle. ■

Protest firing of gay workers

Shouting "racist, sexist, anti-gay, Cracker Barrel bigotry go away!" several hundred people demonstrated August 11 at a Lebanon, Tennessee restaurant. It is the headquarters for the Cracker Barrel chain. A bunch of the protesters marched inside and sat down for several hours at 33 of the 35 tables. Pickets have also been organized at Cracker Barrel restaurants in St. Louis, Atlanta, Tallahassee, Florida and several smaller cities in South Carolina and Georgia.

In January, Cracker Barrel ordered the firing of all lesbian and gay workers in the name of upholding their customer's traditional "family values." These "val-

ues" apparently include racism, as well as anti-gay bigotry, since the restaurants are decorated with confederate flags and carry "redneck" handbooks. Little wonder that the Ku Klux Klan came to its defense.

At least 11 homosexuals were fired in January and February, including several workers with at least three years seniority. In July at least four more were fired in Alabama and Georgia. Workers are rallying to demand the rehiring of those fired and the elimination of the anti-gay policy. Further protests are planned in the coming month. ■

Injured workers demand work

On September 14, more than a dozen supporters of the Injured and Handicapped Postal Workers United (IHPWU) picketed the meeting of the Detroit carrier's union (NALC) to demand light-duty work for injured carriers. The workers were joined by supporters of the MLP to shout "What do we want? Light-

duty work for injured carriers!" and "What do we want? Pushcarts!"

Many injured workers have been laid off or given only a few hours of work even though there is work they could do. Management goes so far as to deny injuries as being work-related so they would not be obligated to provide light-

duty work for carriers injured on the job. Yet the union bureaucrats have not lifted a finger to defend the workers.

Four days later, the IHPWU picketed the Fort Street GMF to protest management's abuse of injured letter carriers. The injured workers also denounced management plans to "excess" (eliminate) a whole slew of clerk jobs at the

facility. The support of the hardpressed injured workers for other workers coming under attack is important to build up the rank-and-file movement. Some workers told the picketers to "keep it up" after reading a statement from IHPWU. A number hung around to chant slogans with the picketers. ■

The NYC subway crash

The August 28 subway train accident in NYC was a terrible tragedy which left five dead and some 170 injured. And it could have been much worse.

The media, the police, and the Transit Authority have had a field day heaping all the blame on the train operator, Robert Ray. First they charged that Ray was on crack. This proved completely false. Then they charged him with speeding because he was stone drunk. And now they are going full steam ahead with the murder charges!

Does the criminal "justice" system move with such speed and determination when the capitalists are clearly at fault? Just a few weeks ago, 25 workers were killed in a fire at a poultry processing plant. While the fire itself may have been an accident, the death of these workers was not. Yet no manager, federal bureaucrat, or owner has yet been accused or indicted of any crime, let alone murder.

The facts are not so straightforward in the train crash. Speeding along the stretch of express track from Grand Central Station to 14th Street is by no means unusual. The TA encourages speeding to meet unrealistic schedules. This train, however, was being switched from the express track onto the local track just outside the 14th Street station. The operator clearly crossed over the switch at high speed. And earlier he had overshot two platforms. That indicates he had a problem. It appears that he fell asleep.

But it wasn't just the motorman who failed. Trains crisscross the city over curves and switches based on a "failsafe" system as a backup for human error. This is supposed to bring trains under control over curves, switches, tunnels, and bridges, or stop them in time if they are out of control due to human or mechanical error.

Even if a motorman dies from a heart attack at the controls or if the most suicidal maniac were to commandeer a train and try to wreck it at high speed, he should be disappointed. The "failsafe" system is supposed to kick in and stop a speeding train. In other words, the system is supposed to prevent exactly what happened on the morning of August 28.

Clearly, the safety trip was improperly placed by TA management much too close to the switch itself, leaving insufficient time to stop the train when the trip is activated. *Newsday* raised, however, that the automatic trip may not have been activated at all.

So after plowing billions of dollars into rebuilding the subways over the past decade, they screwed up the safety system. The lynch mob hysteria over the train operator is aimed at covering over the Transit Authority's responsibility in this avoidable tragedy.

The TA bosses proclaim themselves high priests of safety. In reality, they

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Profit system is the murderer

Continued from front page

every 75 years. According to the state labor secretary John Brooks, "North Carolina has more people on the governor's personal security force than protecting the health and safety of four million workers at 180,000 work places."

But then, even if the plant had been inspected, Imperial would have got no more than a slap on the wrist. Safety inspectors report that the locked exit doors would have constituted a "serious" violation, subject to a maximum penalty of only \$2,500. With such low fines and little inspections, at least three workers are killed every day in North Carolina industries.

Reagan and Bush gave green light to industrial slaughter

Despite this dismal situation, OSHA's latest evaluation of the North Carolina program claimed it was "effective" and North Carolina officials were commended. Such deadly complacency by OSHA is the product of the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Of course, OSHA was never much since it was established in 1970. But

under the Reagan Administration it was further cut back. Complaining about too much "government regulation" and the need to let the "free market" reign, Reagan slashed several hundred safety inspectors. There are now only 1,186 nationally even though more than 17 million workers have been added to the 117 million work force in that last ten years.

The Reagan-Bush attack on OSHA was a green light for the corporations to increase their profits by cutting back on safety. According to official statistics, reported industrial injuries and illnesses have grown from about 4.9 million cases in 1983 to 6.6 million in 1989. And deaths from the deterioration in safety conditions have soared. Since 1987 there has been the collapse of a building in Bridgeport, Connecticut that killed 28 workers; an explosion in Pasadena, California that killed 23 workers; an accident at the ARCO chemical facility in Channelview, Texas that killed 17 workers; the explosion this March at Citgo Petroleum near Lake Charles, Louisiana that killed six workers; and more.

The terrible tragedy in Hamlet, North

Carolina is simply the result of a general capitalist offensive against the workers, an offensive that is supported and encouraged by the government.

Get organized!

In the wake of the Hamlet fire, the Democrats are once again wringing their hands, holding investigations, and calling for stricter safety laws. They hope the workers will forget the fact that they went along with the Reagan-Bush safety cutbacks. And they hope a few minor reforms of OSHA will head off worker outrage.

While the Democrats may shed a few tears over the plight of the workers, they are a capitalist party just like the Republicans. They have supported, and continue to support, the capitalist offensive against the workers. A little posturing won't change a thing. The workers can't trust their fate to the capitalist politicians.

Indeed, stricter safety laws will mean little unless the workers are organized. Workers at the Hamlet plant had repeatedly complained about the unsafe conditions, including the locked exit doors. But those complaints were never heard, or were not listened to, by the state safety officials. When the workers' complaints grew too loud, Imperial systematically fired them.

Only organization on the shop floor gives the workers the strength to carry

out protests and job actions against unsafe conditions and to make their voices heard at the government agencies. Only if the mass of workers organize, can they force industry-wide standards that have some chance of protecting those workers in the worst hell holes, where it is hardest for the workers to stand together.

Unfortunately, the AFL-CIO bureaucrats have done little to organize them. The poultry industry is hauling in \$1.5 billion a year from the grinding exploitation of some 150,000 mostly black women and Mexican immigrant workers. They are stuck in mostly non-union sweatshops, at minimum wages, suffering atrocious conditions. The accident and illness rate in the industry was 25.2 per 100 workers in 1989.

The union hacks are now talking about a big campaign to organize these workers. But with their bureaucratic, top-down approach, their subservience to the laws that restrict organizing, and their emphasis on chasing Democrats to strengthen OSHA laws, there is little hope they will do much more than in the past. The rank-and-file workers can't wait on the union bureaucrats. They must get organized on their own, build shop-floor organization, and unleash an independent fight to improve safety and other conditions. ■

Only 'tank socialists' could have supported the Soviet coup

Communism stands for the liberation of the working class from all oppression. However, there are many political forces which claim to be communist but twist communist ideas into excuses for tyranny. Their "communism" is at best another name for benevolent despotism, at worst a justification for despots without any benevolence. We saw this again when the August 19 coup d'etat took place in the Soviet Union.

Several left-wing groups jumped out with sympathy for the coup. They included the Gus Hall leadership in the CPUSA, Workers World Party, and Bolshevik Tendency. The Spartacist League was also sympathetic to the coup organizers, although it apparently withheld direct support.

CPUSA head Gus Hall welcomed the coup by Gorbachev's vice president Yanayev. This provoked a crisis in the CP, which we cover in another article. Meanwhile, Sam Marcy and his Workers World Party (WWP) also rushed to applaud the coup. Its leaders sought out media interviews, and the bourgeois media was quite happy to show "communists" supporting the reactionary coup. Since the collapse of the coup, WWP has been vociferously defending that stand and giving advice in hindsight to the coup plotters.

Bolshevik Tendency (BT) attempted to join a WWP-called picket in San Francisco to "defend socialism in the USSR." (WWP, with its typical sectarianism, shooed them away.) Meanwhile, it is reported that BT is chastising others for not giving "military support" to the Yanayev coup. Of course, this was just so much tough talk; no one reported seeing any BTers flying over to man the tanks in Moscow.

The Spartacist League's paper came out after the coup was defeated, and it could barely hide its sadness over the failure of the coup. SL didn't support the coup, but they may well have sung a different tune if it had succeeded. They chastised the coup plotters for being stupid, inept, and not ruthless enough. The implication was quite clear that SL would have supported the coup had its organizers talked a bit about mobilizing the workers and sent tanks to seriously smash the opposition. Indeed SL reserved their worst venom for the youth who opposed the coup in Moscow.

How do they explain this corrupt stand?

In one form or another all these groups claimed that the coup was "defending socialism" or "defending nationalized property relations" or "opposing capitalist restoration." These views stem from these groups' revisionist or Trotskyist dogmas which considered the Soviet Union as either a socialist country or a workers' state of some kind — based on the fact that most of the property has been in the hands of the state.

All this is complete nonsense. The coup did not represent a stand in defense of socialism or against the restoration of capitalism.

Capitalism long in place

The Soviet Union was a workers' state when it was set up under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. But it never made it to an elaborated socialist system. Some steps were taken in that direction, but under the impact of ruin from war and other difficult conditions, the rule of the working people broke down and the Soviet Union evolved into a state-capitalist system. Instead of private capitalists

having power, the bureaucracy used its control of the state to exploit the workers. What has been happening in recent years is that the old, state-capitalist system fell into a deep crisis. The Soviet ruling class decided that it had no option but to turn towards more private capitalism. This is not the "restoration of capitalism" but a turn from one kind of capitalism to another.

All factions of the Soviet establishment supported this move: Yanayev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin. At the same time, they had differences: over the pace of reform, over who would get to preserve their privileges, over who would get rich off privatization, etc.

Coup supported the free-market economy

It is ridiculous to say that Yanayev's coup defended socialism. The coup plotters explicitly endorsed the market economy. But theirs was a vision of a market economy not with bourgeois democracy but with an authoritarian regime. Thus, "law and order" was their overriding theme. In other words, the coup plotters' ideal was to set up something like today's China, where free-market exploitation is rampant but where the regime maintains a tight-fisted rule over the masses. Unlike China, however, the coup plotters gave even less lip service to socialism. They didn't even utter the word communism. The "defense of socialism" only appeared in the imagination of Gus Hall, WWP or BT.

"Tank socialism" longs for a past which is finished

In the final analysis, support for the coup reflected the desperation of the supporters of bureaucratic "socialism" in today's world. The truth of the matter is that there is no possibility of preserving the old system in its state-capitalist form in the Soviet Union or the rest of the so-called socialist countries. Gus Hall and WWP are dreaming if they think "tank socialism" can bring the old days back. The CPUSA, WWP, BT and the Sparts all hailed the declaration of martial law in Poland by General Jaruzelski in 1981; and where did that get them? Jaruzelski himself would preside a few years later over the privatization of Poland.

The turn in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has taken place not because Jaruzelski or Gorbachev wasn't "firm" enough and not just because of outside pressure from Western imperialism either. It has taken place because the old, state-capitalist system entered a terminal crisis. Falling into stagnation, it could no longer deliver economically. It could no longer claim to the people that it would give them the advantages of a welfare state — job security, social benefits, etc. — in exchange for acceptance of despotic rule. Nearly everyone wanted change, although different classes had different ideas of what they wanted changed.

Today the main beneficiaries of the turn are the private capitalists and Western imperialists; the bureaucrats aren't doing so bad either as they transform themselves into free-market exploiters. The working people have gained a bit of breathing space for organizing themselves, but they have not been able to develop a clear alternative to defend their interests. And as far as the economy is concerned, they face a good deal of pain ahead, as the welfare-state measures of the old system are stripped away.

We sympathize with the workers'



Protesters atop a tank in Moscow during the coup. Miners struck and thousands rallied to oppose the plotters who wanted a tyranny. Some left-wing groups claim the coup was a 'defense of socialism.' But the coup sought an authoritarian regime with a free-market system, not socialism.

worries about this pain and suffering, but we would be lying to them if we told them that some force among the hated bureaucrats will save them. No, the working class will have to prepare itself through its own trials and experiences for the future. They are their own liberators, and to win freedom, they will have to do it for themselves — by building their own class organization, by elaborating their own stands and platform, by eventually carrying out a revolution for a truly working class run society. There are no

shortcuts to this.

Communism stands for the liberation of the working class from all exploitation, oppression, and tyranny. It believes that the working class must emancipate itself. Communism recognizes that the working class must build its own organization to educate and unite itself, and it rejects those forces and ideas, tyrants or adventurers, who claim to deliver the workers from outside of their own class organizations. ■

Gus Hall supports coup CPUSA in crisis

The August 19 coup in Moscow briefly lifted the spirits of the geriatric leadership of the CPUSA. But just as quickly as the coup collapsed, so too did the crisis of the CP burst into the open, as the party launched into public wrangling between supporters and opponents of the coup organizers.

The Communist Party of the USA — whose communism is as phony as a three-dollar bill — has been the official voice of pro-Soviet revisionism in this country. Communism should mean being the independent voice of the working class. It should mean a revolutionary stand against everything corrupt and unjust. But for the CPUSA, corruption is their middle name, and they slavishly serve two masters. They combine the politics of tailing the liberal-labor Democratic Party with slavish subservience to the bureaucrats in Moscow.

The CPUSA claims to be a workers' party, but it spurned the task of organizing the working class as an independent political force. Instead it urged workers to support the sellout bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO and vote for the Democrats. And at the same time, the CPUSA promoted the state-capitalist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as "real and existing socialism" — its highest aspiration. There was no crime of the bureaucrats in Moscow that the CPUSA would not applaud, no lie that it would not echo. From the exploitation of Soviet workers by the privileged bureaucracy to bloody Soviet-backed crimes abroad. It hailed martial law in Poland and saluted the occupation of Afghanistan.

The CPUSA was very comfortable with the Brezhnev era's self-satisfied lies and arrogance. However, the revelations of crisis in the Soviet Union during the

1980's gave the CPUSA acute indigestion. When Gorbachev began to move away from traditional state-capitalism towards more Western-style capitalism, the CPUSA was uneasy but it backed the new policies as "socialist renewal" in the Soviet Union. That was after all what Gorbachev was saying, and weren't the Kremlin leader's words sacrosanct? However, behind the good face presented in public, the CPUSA began to develop a major split. One tendency, around CPUSA chairman Gus Hall, was uneasy about Gorbachev, while another eagerly embraced Gorbachev's politics.

As Gorbachev's regime turned away from revisionist "Marxism" towards avowedly liberal capitalism, Moscow cut off the indirect subsidies which it used to send to the CPUSA. The CPUSA used to publish a daily newspaper until last year; it was supported by selling thousands of subscriptions to the Soviet bloc. Gus Hall bitterly complained in a recent public speech, "We kept sending them the papers, but they just quit paying for them. They never even sent us a telegram." The CPUSA-connected firm which sold books from the Soviet Union, Imported Publications, was also forced to close because Moscow told them they would no longer be sending them anything.

In this climate, it was hardly a surprise that the coup lifted Gus Hall's spirits. He hoped that the "emergency committee" would bring back the good old days. Thus he sent out a cassette tape to CP branches opposing any condemnation of the coup. He declared, "We should not join in the bring-back Gorbachev campaign." Meanwhile, the CPUSA's Nation-

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Strikes and resistance

Nicaraguan workers bled by 'free market' — part 2

This is the second part of a report from our "Workers' Advocate" correspondent who has been a regular visitor to Nicaragua since the revolution, most recently this May/June. The first part was carried in the September 1 issue.

The industrial workers were some of the first and hardest hit by the new regime. In the spring of 1990 they were the first to take action with a rash of strikes. Retaliation was swift. Thousands of textile, plastics, food processing and other workers were put on mandatory long-term vacations, many others had their plants shut down for good.

Waves of strikes have continued in the state-owned sector and among government employees. The regime has responded with cutbacks, layoffs, reconversion and privatization schemes.

Reconversion at the Milca dairy plant has turned plant workers into street peddlers with an ice-cream cart. In the name of privatization, a series of enterprises have been dismantled and the work force dispersed. For example, *The Workers' Advocate* has carried reports in recent years about organizing among the workers at the modern, state-run pig farms that provided much of the pork for the country. These farms no longer exist.

When the workers go out on strike or take over a plant to defend their jobs and their class, the Sandinista union and party leaders frequently come in to mediate. They don't challenge the logic of the new regime's program, the Sandinistas accept it as a painful necessity. But they come in with their own schemes to ease the pain and take off the sharp edge.

The Sandinistas, for example, are pushing schemes for "privatization in favor of the workers." This may involve employee stock options, or keeping part of the Sandinista management. However, the process of what's called "marginalizing" the working class goes on: with yesterday's workers being pushed into the ranks of street peddlers and unemployed.

Battles in health care and education

The reforms in education and health care were among the most popular byproducts of the revolution. Since the beginning of the year, there have been sharp confrontations between the new regime and the health care workers and teachers.

In January, 32,000 health care employees (from orderlies to doctors) went on strike. They struck to protest their

own miserable wages (in one hospital it was estimated that half the employees were earning under \$50 a month). They also were resisting the ruin of what's left of a public health system in Nicaragua.

A group of 20 health care workers went on a 28-day hunger strike. It was led by an elderly nurse named Aminta Mendez Chinchilla. The hunger strikers' cause gripped the country when Aminta bitterly noted to the press: "The people come to the hospital seeking life and they find death. We don't even have soap to wash them with."

In April, a national teachers' strike began that lasted 52 days. Teachers' salaries had been cut to pieces by the devaluation of the cordoba. (Salaries ranged from 175 to 250 cordobas or \$35 to \$50 per month.) But the government refused to renegotiate. The education minister stonewalled, making it clear that public schools are low on the priorities list. Taking a page from George Bush's book, there was a lot of talk about educational "choice": public schools should not be funded to the detriment of those (wealthy) families who choose private or Catholic schools. Public education for the workers and poor be damned.

The teachers seized the offices of the education ministry and high school students occupied the Palace of the Revolution building. Several days later a settlement was reached and the schools reopened.

But the teachers are still leaving the schools because they cannot eat. Many students are leaving school also, to hustle in the markets where there is a new epidemic of glue-sniffing among hungry young people.

Sandinism's "constructive" opposition

Daniel Ortega and the FSLN directorate have stuck firmly to their "constructive" opposition. Despite everything, they want to be counted in as junior partners of the right-wing government. They too see the international banks as holding the key to Nicaragua's future, and they aren't about to do anything that would make the world's bankers frown.

The FSLN has embraced the demands of the World Bank and the new government for *concertacion*. This is a policy of agreement or arrangement, under which the trade unions are supposed to sit down with the employers and the government to arrange layoffs and other cutbacks and austerity measures. This policy has been a disaster for the workers. It



Nicaraguan health workers press their demands.

has also put the FSLN in a dilemma.

Most of the victims of the cutbacks and wage cuts are members of the FSLN-led National Federation of Labor (FNT). When the workers take strike action they are often faced with a cool attitude from the FNT unions which have signed on to the *concertacion* accords. (The right-wing unions are usually open strikebreakers against "provocative" strikes against the regime.) During the hospital strike, for instance, the workers organized their struggle through strike committees outside of the FNT's FETSALUD union.

"La piñata" and the political ebb

All this weakens the confidence that sections of the workers and poor have had in the FSLN. Even within the FNT it is common for unions, peasant groups or other organizations to try to distance themselves from the FSLN and its policy of "co-government" with the capitalists. However, the mass disillusionment with both ruling factions has yet to translate into energy for radical or independent workers' politics. There is still a political ebb.

Plenty of bickering continues among the ruling factions. Some of the loudest noise is over the so-called "piñata." The right-wing politicians accuse the Sandinistas of transferring to themselves a big "piñata" of property and other wealth at the time of the transfer of power. The right-wing opposition wants revenge against this "robbery," to get back what they believe has been taken from them no matter the cost. Violeta Chamorro's ruling group agrees; but they want to tread carefully to not undo their working cooperation with the FSLN. For its part, the FSLN protests that the "piñata" is only a fabrication of the right wing.

PERU Continued from back page

Bush's spokesmen say "you cannot separate Sendero from drugs." But who has actually been encouraging coca production in Peru?

The Upper Huallaga Valley is the world's main coca-growing region. The Peruvian government has resettled many peasants there from mountain areas, where the peasants were demanding land. The government tried to stave off peasant uprisings by relocating them to the Upper Huallaga, where they were given small plots of land. But the government neglected to provide peasants with the capital necessary to make a living from farming. And the depressed prices for food crops make it uneconomical to grow food for sale. As a result, many peasants turned to coca production as the only way to survive.

This enabled the peasants to produce a salable crop. But it also put them under the thumb of drug kingpins, whose local thugs terrorized the peasants. The

growth of Sendero among the peasants there is based on their activity to counter the drug lords' influence. Sendero protects the peasants and regulates coca production and sale, ensuring that the peasants receive a fair price.

Bush and Fujimori, in their "war on drugs," take the policy of "bombs away." Government troops with U.S. advisers invade the coca production areas, massacring civilians, raping women, etc. Bush calls this "fighting drugs," but actually it is just imperialist slaughter designed to intimidate the masses who are getting organized.

Remember Panama? Bush claimed that Panamanian leader Noriega was connected to drug running. So he launched an invasion, massacred thousands of innocent civilians, captured Noriega, and set up a puppet regime. But today (almost two years later), under the Endara regime, there are more drugs than ever coming to the U.S. out of Panama. (See the *New York Times* of August 13.) Noriega was involved in drugs, but this

wasn't why Bush went after him. After all, Noriega had been involved in the drug trade while he was providing useful services to the CIA. It's only when Noriega balked at doing certain things for the U.S. government that he became an obstacle to be removed.

Bush and establishment leaders tell us

DRUG WAR Continued from front page

been ruined. The products they used to produce — tin, coffee, etc. — bring pitiful prices. The countries have huge debts to foreign banks. Unemployment and grinding poverty are the fate of the majority. Is it any wonder that peasants, and laid-off workers, turn to growing coca?

U.S. military intervention will not help free the Andean poor of misery. No, it is only meant to drive them further into the dust. What is more, the U.S. is helping to strengthen the military in these countries — and these militaries are nothing but fascists. In much of the

No doubt the Sandinistas have taken for themselves some prime properties, contracts and other spoils of their former offices. It seems that Daniel Ortega himself has taken a choice block of Managua real estate for his private estate. However, the pigging out of former officials tends to hide that there is more at stake in this fuss over the "piñata." There are the tens of thousands of squatters who seized much of Managua's open space during the transition. These new shanty towns are under assault. The right-wing mayor of Managua has sent in bulldozers and police and the new barrios have put up a stiff fight.

This is something of a pattern. Whether it is the striking public sector workers or protesting peasants, a shadow is cast over the struggle by the efforts of the Sandinista officials and bureaucrats to hang onto their positions and perks. The FSLN usually ends up playing the role of mediator, giving priority to their own positions and preaching to the workers about the need to accept the realities of World Bank economics.

All this has left a bitter taste in the mouths of the working people. With the revolution the exploited masses raised their heads and started to feel that they must be counted as active molders of the society. That window has closed with the "free market" counterrevolution. Heads are once again bowed in the daily hustle to make a buck and get by. Politics are once again seen as the private game of the corrupt, the filchers, the demagogues.

The revival of the revolutionary movement in Nicaragua will be connected with the workers turning towards their own politics, against the inhuman "free market" and against the reformist co-government with the reactionaries. ■

to "say no to drugs." Fine. But we should go further, and say no to Bush and Fujimori's capitalism which has given rise to the drug trade. And we must also say no to Bush's "war on drugs," which is only aimed at propping up exploitation and slaughtering the poor and minorities in the process. ■

Andes, there are resistance movements and guerrilla armies growing among the poor, and the local military is engaged in brutal wars against them. This year again, as in the last five, Peru will top the United Nations list for countries that "disappear" their citizens. This is the war that the U.S. is backing up.

As in the streets of the U.S., the "war on drugs" in Latin America amounts to a war on the poor. It is a reaffirmation of U.S. imperialist lordship. We must raise our voices against the imperialist drive that is creating new Viet Nams in the Andes. ■

The 'war on drugs' is a war on the poor

Another U.S. dirty war in the making Green Berets, out of Peru!

It isn't yet making headlines in the media, but the U.S. government is rushing to expand its military involvement in Peru.

On September 17, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori arrived in Washington for his first meeting with George Bush. He also sought Congressional help to clear approval of U.S. military support.

In August the State Department announced that more than 50 new U.S. military advisers will go to that Latin American country in coming months. They will train Peruvian combat battalions, create a river patrol force, and refurbish helicopters. This is part of a new agreement the U.S. made with Peru in May. The U.S. will provide \$160 million; \$60 million for the rest of this year, \$100 million the next. Much of this package is assistance to the Peruvian military.

What type of system in Peru is the U.S. military propping up? This year a cholera epidemic has ravaged that country, thriving in the desperate misery, poor health and sanitary conditions there. In the shantytowns of Lima, unemployment is near 90%. Inflation and austerity cutbacks weigh heavily on workers. Public sector workers, including teachers and nurses, are almost constantly on strike, fighting to keep their wages above starvation level.

The Peruvian military — in uniform and through its unofficial death squads — is ruthless in pursuing critics of the regime. This military today has the worst record of torture, disappearances and summary executions in the hemisphere.

Bush's aid for Peru does not aim to help out the people of Peru. Rather, the purpose of this aid is to smash the guerrilla movement which has been growing among the peasantry. Bush's aid is aimed at propping up the bourgeois government and at benefiting the imperialist corporations which own mines and other property there. U.S. aid will only mean more suffering for the Peruvian poor.

The "war on drugs" is the pretext

U.S. intervention abroad has been carried on under many different excuses. In the case of Peru, and the rest of the Andean countries, the pretext is the U.S. "war on drugs."

Peru is the world's major grower of coca, the plant from which cocaine is made. For centuries Andean peasants have grown coca, using it as a mild stimulant and making tea out of it. In recent years, however, demand for coca has grown as the cocaine and crack market expanded in North America and Europe. The economy of Peru has turned to coca, because it has collapsed in the face of debt payments and low prices for its traditional products.

Many of the well-off in Peru are drawing the biggest benefits from the drug trade, including the government itself. For example, the country is awash in dollars from the drug trade. The Central Reserve Bank buys \$4-13 million a day, and renames those dollars "reserves" when it restacks them in its vaults.

But who bears the brunt of the U.S. military's mission of fighting drugs? The poor. In truth, the Peruvian government and military do not give a hang for the war on drugs. But they have found it a convenient pretext to seek aid from



U.S. DEA 'adviser' on helicopter patrol in Peru.

Washington. Their real aim is the war on the peasant guerrilla movement, and this is the war the U.S. is joining up with.

The U.S. has already built a military

base in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, a major center for insurrectionary activity. And the U.S. military has participated in bombardment of villages in the area.

About the guerrilla movement

The major revolutionary organization in Peru is Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Sendero is a peasant revolutionary movement which follows Maoist ideology. (The other guerrilla group is the Tupac Amaru movement.)

Sendero has achieved notable success in the past ten years. The bourgeois government's brutality and neglect of the peasant masses have given Sendero fertile conditions for growth. It has expanded from its original base in the impoverished, semi-arid Ayacucho region into the lush tropical Upper Huallaga. Today Sendero claims to control over 30% of the country.

Sendero's politics and outlook reflect its social base among poor peasants. Emerging in the midst of extremely harsh conditions faced by the Indian peasantry, Sendero has been able to inspire peasant youth into an uncompromising revolu-

tionary stance against the exploiters. However, despite claiming to be a communist organization based on scientific ideology, Sendero has many features of a peasant cult. And it also has a strong tendency of sectarianism to those among the masses and left activists who do not see eye to eye with it; sometimes this even takes the form of violence.

The Workers' Advocate does not agree with those who glorify Sendero Luminoso as the "real communists" of today's world. We share Sendero's revolutionary hatred for the present system in Peru, but we do not share their vision of the society they would like to establish. But, no matter what one thinks of Sendero, we think it is the task of all anti-imperialists in the U.S. to oppose U.S. imperialist backing for the dirty war of the Peruvian military.

Bush's "war on drugs" is an imperialist lie

The Bush administration accuses Sendero of protecting the drug trade.

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Pentagon digs its claws into Bolivia

As in Peru, Bush's "war on drugs" is being extended into Bolivia. There too it means sending in U.S. Green Berets to train and assist the Bolivian military in murderous raids on impoverished peasants. And the background is much the same: poor people in the mountainous regions are being urged by the government to leave their homes and to look for work in the eastern semi-tropical areas. But once they arrive, the immigrants face starvation unless they can land a job as a farm laborer on a large plantation. The only alternative is growing coca themselves.

Now the government, which has practically forced many peasants into coca production, is backing Bush's "war on drugs." This means bombarding the poor peasants who have taken up coca production in a desperate attempt to avoid starvation.

However the Bolivian masses are not accepting the U.S.-backed militarization quietly. In April, a nationwide strike protested the entry of Green Berets into Bolivia. In June, peasants set up nationwide roadblocks.

The Bolivian government is subservient to Washington on every question of domestic policy. President Jaime Paz Zamora hesitates to carry out any plans until he has consulted with the American embassy. Zamora the social-democrat is faithfully carrying out the austerity policies designed for the previous conservative regime of Paz Estenssoro by Harvard economics professor Jeffrey Sachs, even though it has meant disaster for the working class.

"Free market" economics at work: disaster for the workers

Sachs' program called for stabilizing the Bolivian currency by means of massive cutbacks in government expenditures and privatization of government enterprises. Thousands of state-enterprise workers were thrown off the job, including miners in the government-owned tin mines. The massive layoffs were accompanied with wage cuts for the workers



Peasants march against U.S. military presence in Bolivia

still employed, while prices on consumer goods continued to rise. Today inflation has calmed down, but that means little to workers with no income.

Today, of Bolivia's seven million people, a good two million are in the "informal" economy — peddlers, street vendors, etc. Right-wing economists are waxing enthusiastic about this, since they say this is the base of the new entrepreneurs, the capitalists of tomorrow. Yes, a few of these people may eventually accumulate a few dollars. But little growth can come from such survival-level businesses. In the meantime, you have two million people earning just enough to eat. The "informal economy" is just another fancy phrase describing the urban poor.

There are another one million rural poor, who live off subsistence farming. They live in scattered settlements, cut off almost entirely from schools and doctors. Even before the cholera epidemic, the major cause of death in Bolivia, after respiratory illness, was diarrhea. Two-thirds have no clean water supply, three-fourths no sewage system.

This is the population now being decimated by the capitalist free market. The imperialist bankers are enthusiastic that Bolivia's currency has been stabi-

lized, but for the masses things have gone from bad to worse. (Meanwhile, Sachs went from Bolivia to Poland, where he designed the "shock treatment" transition to private-market capitalism. Now the Harvard school of economists is getting ready to bring their miracles to the Soviet Union.)

The Bolivian toilers need organization to counter the shock treatment meted out to them by the bourgeoisie and imperialism. They need organization to resist the U.S. military intervention in the name of the drug war. They will have to build revolutionary organization to eventually liberate themselves from the scourge of exploitation.

The shock-treatment economics severely weakened the Bolivian trade union movement which had strong traditions of struggle. However, even in the midst of their desperate situation, the Bolivian toilers have not given up their efforts to maintain organization. Although their present, scattered situation makes the effort to preserve solidarity difficult, still the masses have come up with various forms of organization to serve their needs — from neighborhood committees to street vendors' unions and unions of landless peasants.