Polish Workers Clash With Gov't Over Independent Trade Unions

Toward a United Class: Criminals or Workers?

JLP Sweeps Jamaican Elections

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From Buffalo to Atlanta: Epidemic of Racist Terror

By FRANK HOPKINS

A wave of brutal, "random" murders has hit the country, with killings reported in at least seven different cities. What ties all the incidents together is racism: Most of the victims were Black, the others were whites in the company of Blacks. All the victims were simply going about their own business when they were attacked.

In Atlanta, Georgia, 15 Black children have been kidnapped and murdered over the past 45 months. Every 21 to 29 days, another child has disappeared. All the victims were taken from their own neighborhoods—some even snatched from their own homes. Eleven bodies (Continued on page 4)

Elections '80:
A Move to the Right?

NOVEMBER 11—As Election Day drew nearer, we must admit that our feeling was largely one of relief. Soon all the election hullabaloo would be over—the tactical switching of positions, the empty promises, the never-ending images of grinning candidates.

But the actual results of the November 4 elections cannot be dismissed so lightly. In particular, many people seem frightened at the prospect of a Reagan administration and the right-wing policies Reagan promises to implement. We feel it necessary, therefore, to address the questions people are asking about what the election results indicate, and what we can expect under a Reagan administration.

1. Hasn't the country moved sharply to the right?

Looked at simply from the point of view of who won, the answer seems to be yes. And certainly the ruling class, as well as sections of the middle class, have moved considerably to the right. But we don't believe that most people in the U.S. have become right wing.

Only 52.3 percent of all eligible voters went to the polls on November 4. We can assume that the people who didn't vote—almost half the voting-age population—have not particularly supported the candidates of either party, since there was a viable right-wing candidate to vote for in Reagan. All told, Reagan received the votes of only 27 percent of eligible voters—hardly an overwhelming mandate for hardline right-wing policies.

Moreover, polls show that many working people who voted for Reagan did so as a vote against Carter (particularly the decline in the economy under his administration) rather than for Reagan and his long-standing far-right program. This too does not signal a big move to the right.

The ruling class, on the other hand, has made a marked shift to the right. As we have discussed in previous issues, this flows from the fact that their system is in for a deep crisis. Following the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, the capitalist class employed a "liberal" strategy for stabilizing capitalist rule—particularly a massive increase in the role of the state (the government) in the economy—known as Keynesianism.

This strategy did play a role in creating an era of capitalist stability and prosperity in the U.S. But it did so only by ignoring some old problems, while creating new ones—in particular the enormous growth of government, corporate and private debt, which, coupled with the decay of industrial infrastructure, has been the major cause of permanent inflation.

With the beginnings of the present crisis, the ruling class has looked for—in the jargon of this election campaign—"new ideas." They are turning away from the liberal strategies and replacing them with more conservative ones. Behind this turn is a desire for a freer hand to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class to boost their declining profits.

The political troops for the capitalists' intensified drive for profits have been sections of the middle class, particularly whites, who have also turned to the right. They feel cheated; they were brought up on the "American Dream," which promised that anybody could "make it" if they simply worked hard enough. Economically atomized, they now feel powerless to fight the effects of rising inflation and high unemployment. Already open to racist ideas or racist themselves, many have come to believe that the problem is that people who are more
The Revolutionary Socialist League Needs Your Help!

On November 1, the RSL launched a drive to raise $12,500 by January 15, 1981. To date, we have raised $6,728, slightly more than half of our goal. Many of the initial contributions to the fund drive have come from our own members, putting us well ahead of schedule. But to reach our goal, we now need the support of Torch/La Antorcha readers.

These are both lean and challenging times for the revolutionary left. Well-financed campaigns are underway against unionization, affirmative action, desegregation, abortion rights, lesbian and gay rights, passage of the ERA, etc. Incidents of racist violence occur almost daily in Buffalo, Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Boston and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the dollar slide continues. Tens of thousands of people have been thrown out of work, prices climb, the cities rot and the quality of life grows worse.

We believe that it is more important than ever to stand firm in our efforts to build the core of a revolutionary socialist workers’ party. At a time when many are despairing of the vision of a new socialist world of freedom and liberation, we think it is essential to tell the truth—that socialist revolution is the only alternative to fascism and war.

To reach our goal of $12,500, we need the help of the many Torch/La Antorcha readers who have contributed generously to our drives in the past, as well as that of the new friends we have made since our last drive. Please make check or money order payable to Torch/La Antorcha or Rod Miller and send to: RSL, PO Box 1288, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

More on ‘El Grito de Dolores’

Dear Torch/La Antorcha:

I am writing about the article in the September 15-October 14, 1980, issue of the Torch/La Antorcha on the “Grito de Dolores.” I believe the article contains some inaccuracies about the Mexican Revolution, particularly about the role of Father Hidalgo and Captain Allende.

Like many people of the time Hidalgo was a radical, but middle class, revolutionary. He wanted to overthrow the vogue of reactionary colonialism and Hidalgo, Spanish colonialism, replacing it with an enlightened bourgeois regime. He was willing to use the masses and was sympathetic to them, but at the same time feared a society run by the working and peasant masses.

Within six weeks after the Grito de Dolores, Hidalgo’s forces had almost conquered all of Mexico. The sheer numbers of Hidalgo’s poorly trained and poorly armed troops overwhelmed the professional Spanish forces, although with great sacrifice.

By the end of October, Hidalgo’s forces, numbering 100,000, were on the outskirts of Mexico City. They could have easily captured it and ended the War of Independence. But, as a historian, Michael Meyer, put it, Hidalgo “was uneasy about turning his mob [sic] loose on Mexico City—they would have devastated the capital.” By putting the interests of the middle class before the masses, he ended up betraying the revolution. The war dragged on for years.

Later on, Allende (now in charge) had captured several ruling class political and military leaders. To show that the revolution did not oppose or threaten the ruling elite of Mexico, Allende released these leaders to the local ruling class in Monclova, Coahuila. These leaders were then able to set up an ambush, resulting in the capture of both Allende and Hidalgo, decisively ending the first part of the War for Independence with the defeat of the revolution.

The article in the Torch/La Antorcha gives the impression that the superior military training of the Spanish army caused the defeat of the revolution. As recent events in Iran and Nicaragua have shown, the masses can overcome these obstacles. No.

Sanity Now?

Torch editors:

In your August/September issue appears the headline “We Must Defend the Rights of Everyone” to the letter from Reginald E., Frank of Soledad. No qualifications. Are you and the writer supporting the right of free speech for nazis andKKKs? In light of their record, we hold that scum in “In Revolutionary Words But forces had almost conquered Iran and Nicaragua have Comradely...”

We suspect that something is amiss and its valian mass media. So also did ACLU whose narrow petty bourgeois minds are unable to expand and swing with the revolutionary times in which we live. By the unwise choice of that headline, you contributed further to Brother Frank’s confusion and also to that of your readers. A better one would be “In Revolutionary Words But Not In Deeds.” A reading of the historical writings of the framers of the First Amendment prove that they never dreamed it would be the cover for such deeds as the phony religious cults busily subverting youth, minds, as well as the nazis/KKKs.

Editor’s reply—We are sorry if the editor of Sanity Now and any other readers were confused by our headline. Regular readers of the Torch/La Antorcha are aware, the RSL gives no support whatsoever to the forces of capitalist reaction. Groups to spread their racist filth and terror.

We suspect that something else is going on here, however. According to Roe, our choice of headline “contributed further to Brother Frank’s confusion....” What confusion is he referring to?

Brother Frank wrote that when he began reading the Torch, he asked himself: “Why is the League so interested in defending the rights of gay people?” He went on to explain that he now understands “in order to get working class and oppressed people ready for revolution you have to stress and defend the rights of everyone and gay people are a great part of the oppressed masses.” The headline came from this phrase in the editor’s introduction, and clearly referred to defending the rights of all oppressed people.

We don’t think that Brother Frank is confused at all. Rather, we suspect that Sanity Now, which expresses close agreement with the Communist Party USA, is making a back-handed attempt to attack the view that revolutionaries should fight to defend lesbian and gay rights. The CPUSA has for years refused to take up this struggle.

We would further suggest that Roe’s faith in the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights is far more reactionary than our headline. We might remind the editor of Sanity Now that the framers of the Bill of Rights looked on most Black people asproperty and denied women the right to vote!

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Detroit Residents Fight Plan by City, GM to Cut Jobs, Destroy Community

By BOB ANDERSON

DETOIT, November 6—
The government of this "Motor City" has shown once again whose interests it is there to uphold.

On October 31, the Detroit City Council voted 8-1 in favor of a proposal that would give hundreds of millions of dollars to help General Motors—the third largest corporation in the United States—build a new plant. The result would be that thousands of GM workers would lose their jobs and an entire multi-national, working class neighborhood would be destroyed.

The City Council vote followed an announcement by GM last June that it was closing its Fleetwood and Cadillac plants in the city, threatening to move the entire operation to another state unless the city of Detroit met its demands.

This is the deal: The city will use public money—$200 million is the current estimate—to prepare a 465 acre site for GM to build a new, highly automated plant on the city's east side. The city will use its tax dollars to buy up hundreds of homes, businesses, many churches and a hospital. They will drive over 3,500 working people from their homes, build doze more than 700 acres (including the closed Dodge Main plant) and then give nearly all of it to GM. In addition, the city has agreed to give GM a $10 million a year tax abatement for 12 years.

Altogether, the city will give over $320 million (it will end up being much more) to General Motors, hardly an institution that needs charity.

9,000 jobs will be lost

Local politicians have claimed that by supporting the project they have saved jobs. The truth is that the Fleetwood and Cadillac plants, which GM plans to close, employed 15,000 workers before the latest round of layoffs. The new plant will be automated to carry out the same production with at most 6,000 workers. In other words, the city will be giving GM all this money, a driving all these people from their homes to "save" 6,000 jobs—and lose 9,000 others.

The workers in the target area have been fighting to stop the project and defend their community. This is an integrated working class neighborhood: approximately 50 percent Black and 50 percent white. Poles, Blacks, Arabs, Native Americans, Italians and others have stood together to oppose the project. The city had a number of public hearings to try and sell the idea but met strong opposition each time. The final hearing took place at Kettering High School on October 14. Even though the school is several miles from the neighborhood, over 1,000 people turned out, the vast majority to show their opposition and disgust for the whole stinking deal.

GM and the city took two hours to present their case, including a show with pictures of "old-age" complexes where the many senior citizens from the neighborhood might be forced to live after they are driven from their homes. Using the two or three minutes allotted them, resident after resident got up—increasing with more than 50 years in the area—to denounce GM and the city. Many said flatly that they would not be moved. Several workers from the Fleetwood plant also attended and told the truth about how many jobs would be lost. Martin Andrews, who has 14 years at Fleetwood, explained that every worker with less than 15 years' seniority would lose his or her job.

The Poletown Neighborhood Council has been at the center of the organized opposition to the project inside the community. Over 100 residents regularly attend the meetings, and the group has worked to unite all races and nationalities in the area. The council has held two demonstrations against the project: one a picket line at GM's world headquarters, a few blocks from the community, and the other at a local Catholic church where the priest had put out a newsletter supporting the project.

On November 3, the group held its first meeting since the City Council approved the project. About 150 people came out, and—though they were shaken and angered—their spirits are not broken. The city has sent out its first offers to buy their homes, which has stiffened their resolve to fight.

Mary Mitchell, a Black home seller and mother of 10, told the meeting that the city had offered her $13,500 for her home. This is what she paid for it. She said, "If they come back to me with that offer, they're not going to take it."

GM has spent money on improvements. If she accepts the government's offer, GM will have only $3,500 to buy a new home after her mortgage is paid off. Others told of similar roten offers. Tucker, one worker, said it will provide up to a maximum of $15,000 in relocation costs after people get out of their homes, but no one believes what the city says and most people at the meeting were determined to hold out.

Poletown group asks courts to halt project

So far, the main strategy of the Poletown group has been to oppose the project in the courts. On October 31, the group filed a suit against the city, claiming it is illegally using the right of eminent domain, which means the city could condemn the whole project area and evict those people who are refusing to sell, to benefit GM, a private corporation. This case will be heard over the next few weeks, but the city could begin eminent domain proceedings by mid-December.

At the November 3 meeting, RSL supporters who live in the target area and have been active in the fight urged the Poletown group not to rely on the courts. GM controls the city government, and GM and others like it run the whole country, and they can obviously get their way in the courts. We proposed against the demonstration to organize our forces and build broader support. We and others are fighting to ensure that not one resident will be forced to move until they find new housing that meets their needs with the costs subsidized by GM and the city. We will have to get better organized to fight for these demands and to stop the evictions attempted by the city. All of this got a good response and the proposed demonstration is supposed to be the first agenda item at the next Poletown meeting.

To build the fight against the GM project, we need to open up the Poletown Neighborhood Council. We should have full discussions at the meetings on the best strategy for fighting GM and the city. If residents and supporters know they can come to the meetings, put forward their ideas on how to fight and that this will lead to concrete actions against the project, then we have the potential to involve many more people at a higher level of activity. We must also organize broader support. The only way to fight GM and the city is with a united working class struggle.

The most obvious alliance is between Fleetwood/Cadillac workers who will lose their jobs and community residents who will lose their homes. Several of the Fleetwood workers who attended the Kettering meeting will be called back from layoff in the next few weeks and will be in a better position to get out the truth about the new plant and organize against it. We should work to unite GM workers, residents and others to build the proposed demonstration. Sit-ins, demonstrations, organizing to stop evictions and other militant tactics will show working people that we can organize to defend ourselves.

Right now, however, it looks like the project is going through. The working class is not organized to wage the kind of battle that is necessary to win these and other demands. The leaders of the trade unions, our most powerful organizations, are just as bad as the politicians. They will not mobilize our forces to fight—in fact, there are reasons to believe that the United Auto Workers International leadership is secretly backing the project. If GM workers and the community residents can get together and fight to save jobs and defend the neighborhood, this will be an important step toward building the united working class struggle we so desperately need.

Working people treated like animals

In Poletown, people who worked all their lives to make the owners of GM and other corporations incredibly wealthy are being treated like animals. The owners of GM and the rest of the ruling class make all the major decisions in this country based on what will maximize their profits. They control the cops, the courts and the government. Working people have no control over their jobs, their homes or their lives. The only possibility left for the working class is to organize and fight to take over complete control of GM and the other major corporations and to run them based on what people need to live decent lives. We have to overthrow the government of the corporations and replace it with a revolutionary government of the entire working class. The fight against the GM project in Detroit is an important battle; many more will follow. Working class resistance is growing.
A right-wing conspiracy?

All of this has led people in Black communities across the country to believe that there was some kind of organized conspiracy behind the murders. They suspect that some right-wing group, like the Ku Klux Klan or the Nazis, may be behind these incidents, trying to provoke racial violence on a mass scale.

There are good reasons to suspect this. For one thing, the same semi-automatic, .38-caliber weapon was used to kill four of the six Black men murdered in Buffalo, while a high-powered rifle was used to kill the victims in most of the other cities.

For another, there is the recent arrest of Joseph Paul Franklin on October 28. Franklin is a 30-year-old white man who has bragged that he is a member of the Ku Klux Klan. He is suspected in the shooting of Vernon Jordan, president of the National Urban League, earlier this year and is wanted for questioning for the Salt Lake City murders. He is also known to have been in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Oklahoma City and Johnstown.

in the white community that the Black community is a powder keg that can be touched off by any small incident with racial overtones.

The real reason anything is getting done about the racist murders is that working class people, especially Black people, have been putting together a response. After the Buffalo murders, a group of 60 people planned a Black and white unity rally. This was quickly endorsed by city officials, along with religious and civil rights leaders. On October 19, 5,000 people rallied. Since that time, the racist violence in Buffalo appears to have subsided.

In Atlanta, a number of things have been done. First, as the Atlanta press stated, Black people and civil rights organizations have put pressure on the authorities to do something about the kidnap/murders. Second, volunteer search parties organized to try to recover kidnap victims. These parties were set up in conjunction with the city government. The initial search party included 250 people. Now, hundreds more have joined in. Third, reward money has been offered for the city's murdered children. The reward money is now up to $150,000.

Capitalism is the link

At the most basic level, however, these murders have another link. That is the capitalist system. Capitalism means misery for the majority of people—Black, Latin, Native American, Asian and white. As the system rots, poor and working class people end up competing with one another for fewer and fewer jobs, less housing and louser jobs.

This intensified competition leads to an increase in hostility to Black people and racism in general. It creates conditions that make certain whites open to the idea that the cause of the crisis is around the times of the ambush murders in those cities. It could very well be that Franklin is involved in a lot of what's been going on. It may also be the case that he is not working on his own, but is some right-wing terrorist group. Though cops in Atlanta, Buffalo and some other cities have been saying that their cases were "unique" and "unconnected," it's pretty clear that at least some of these murders are connected.

Government fears Black rebellion

Today, it appears that local governments are actually doing something to defend the lives of Black people. But what is being done by the various authorities is only the result of pressure by Black people—and the big shots' fear of another Black rebellion. The Atlanta Journal/Constitution admitted as much in an article on October 19: "Blacks... have not forgotten that concerned Black parents have screamed for 'a long time' before city officials started treating the disappearances of Black children as related incidents and shifted their investigation into high gear."

"Since all the slain and missing children have come from lower-income neighborhoods, Blacks in those areas felt nobody cared what happened to their children, not even the 'high class' Black officials they had elected to serve them...." "Meanwhile, fear is brewing..."
second, volunteer teams were organized and over 250 volunteers joined in the effort to save lives. The volunteers included Black women and men, as well as a number of volunteers from different parts of the country.

Anti-Nazi demonstrators were organized and began to arrive at the rally site. The Nazis, on the other hand, had only a small number of supporters. The Nazis were met with jeers and boos by the crowd, and their signs were burned.

The Nazis were eventually confronted by a large number of police officers, who attempted to disperse the crowd and arrest the Nazis. In spite of this, the Nazis continued to hold their rally and eventually managed to escape.

The trial of the Nazis continued for several months, during which time the Nazis were found guilty of murder and sentenced to the death penalty. The Nazis appealed their sentence, but their appeal was rejected.

The case of the Nazis was an important victory for the working class movement, as it showed that the Nazis were not invincible and that the people had the strength to defeat them. The case also highlighted the importance of organizing and fighting back against the Nazis, and the role of the police in protecting the Nazis.

As the trial continued, the Nazis became more and more isolated, and their support began to wane. The Nazis were eventually defeated, and the case of the Nazis became a symbol of the power of the working class to defeat the Nazis.

The Nazis' defeat was a significant victory for the working class movement, and it showed that the people had the strength to defeat the Nazis. The case of the Nazis was an important lesson in the power of organizing and fighting back against the Nazis, and it encouraged the working class to continue to fight for their rights.
Death sentence upheld in California

On October 23, the California Supreme Court upheld the death sentence of Earl Lloyd Jackson, a 23-year-old Black prisoner. Jackson's lawyer plans to appeal. If he loses, it could mean the resumption of legal murder in the gas chamber at San Quentin, where 42 men sit on death row, awaiting decisions on their appeals. The last execution in California was in 1982.

As a result of the mass struggles of the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court halted all executions in 1972. It declared existing death penalty laws unconstitutional in 1972, but only because they were unenforceable. In 1976 it upheld new death penalty laws that had been enacted by Georgia, Florida and Texas. Since then, 34 more states have restored capital punishment, and three prisoners have been executed.

The rules are trying to keep the prisoners from accepting the death penalty. The Supreme Court has laid down rules of how it should be applied to make it seem "fair." And now the experts are debating the most humane way to murder prisoners. (Some favor cleaner, "nicer" lethal injections over the more "barbaric" chair and the gas chamber.) The first victims for the executioners' axe were carefully chosen so as not to arouse too much public sympathy: Gary Gilmore in 1977 and Jesse Bishop in 1979, whose lawyers lost in the courts. John Spenkelnk, killed in May 1979, a so-called drifter with eight felony convictions, All three were white--to obscure the racism of the death penalty. But more than half the prisoners on death row are Black.

Lewisburg keeps NAACP out

Last month the authorities at the federal prison in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, closed the office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to all outside members and officials of the organization. The keepers claim the direction and advice given by the NAACP violates prison policy of having all prison organizations self-governing. No specific incident led up to the six-month ban. It's nothing but a racist attack on the rights of Black prisoners. Not surprisingly, the local Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), which also has prison chapters, are not subject to such bans.

More jails....more prisons

The U.S. ranks third, after South Africa and Russia, in the number of people incarcerated—250 per 100,000 population. While 21 states are under court order to reduce their prison populations because of overcrowding, another 314,000 people were jailed in 1979.

"In 1979, Abt Associates of Boston did a sophisticated study for Congress. It found that the most important single contributor to prison population was...simply the availability of cells," said William G. Nagel, executive vice president of the Institute of Corrections, in a speech to a seminar for legislators. "Judges, prosecutors, police, and parole boards," he continued, "all adjust their practices to the availability of prison space..."

While the states claim they have no money for schools or hospitals, they are building more prisons—at a minimum cost of $50,000 per cell. For example, New York state opened 300 new cells at Downstate prison in Fishkill this September. Authorized construction of two new 512-bed prisons in Woodbourne and Wailkill; has tentatively approved a new prison in or near New York City; and plans to create hundreds of cells by 1982. The Plan is to create space for more than 8,000 cells in the heavily armed facilities of the state system, to serve the interests of local and federal governments.

Knutson and the BOP's true jail facility in San Diego stated that Knutson's research is a project that the BOP would do itself if it had the money instead of having the money to pay for it. It is claimed that the research is funded through UCLA and the National Institute of Health; and Knutson is also associated with the "Wright Institute" in Berkeley.

Psychological profiles of those who engage in revolutionary armed struggle are of obvious use to the state: to aid the keepers of prisoners in developing behavior modification programs designed to change (control and silence) the revolutionary behavior and beliefs of political prisoners; to aid the police and military forces in targeting "potential troublemakers;" as propaganda tools to confuse people generally with theories of individual deviant or aberrant psychological development in those who struggle for change.

Knutson's tactics include claims that she wishes to be a mouthpiece to all those poor "terrorists" who never got to tell their story to the judge or the press; claims that the research is positively intended to reveal what leads people to a total commitment to certain principles regardless of self-interest; claims that co-defendants have agreed to and given interviews; dropping names of known political prisoners and stating that everyone else had talked to her and given interviews.

"Contrary to her claims, Knutson's and the BOP's true purpose is revealed in a 76 page document obtained by another revolutionary community worker who was approached for, and also refused, an interview. Titled "Social and Psychodynamic Pressures Toward a Negative Identity: The Case of an American Revolutionary-Terrorist," the document is based on one of Knutson's interviews. The premise put forward is that all "terrorists" do what they do because of a combination of 1) a radical family background, 2) unmet personality needs, and 3) severe life disappointments. The purpose of all this psychological evaluation is clearly stated on page 22 of the document: "...the eventual elimination of violence as a valued means to accomplish political ends."

Such reactionary theories to explain away peoples' righteous discontent with material, racial, class, and the theft of our wages, the erosion of our rights to life and health, the destruction of the planet, etc., because we have a parent die in our youth, a messy divorce, failed college entrance exams (all examples used in Knutson's document), or other personal and individual reasons.

Knutson, and her research project to evaluate every politically motivated prisoner in the federal system, is a clear agent of the forces of reaction, and prisoners everywhere should be warned to interview her.

THROUGHOUT history people have united in common interest, fought, and died for the right to control their own lives and destinies, and in response to the concrete realities of their existence. Throughout history, people in struggle have armed themselves in these struggles in defense against the heavily armed forces of imperialism and reaction. People continue to fight today for societies organized to serve peoples' needs instead of serving the profit interests of a few rich and well-armed owners whose "power" rests on the force of arms and the theft, plunder and destruction of the world's resources.

All the anti-terrorist propaganda in the world cannot stop the forward movement of the people united in their own interests.

Power to those who don't fear freedom! Love and struggle, Theresia C"
A Prisoner Writes

Toward a United Class: Criminals or Workers?

While going through some old files, I came across the following statement from Auburn prison in New York. We thought it was a very good article explaining why prisoners are workers, what their relationship is to the class struggle and what prisoners should be doing inside prison and when they get out.

The statement wasn’t signed, so if anyone recognizes this statement as their own, or if you know whose place it is, let us know. We’d like to hear from you and what you think of the struggle today. —Mary Rivers

Who are we and why are we in prison? These two questions should be uppermost in the minds of every man and woman behind prison walls. Criminologists (people who study crime and criminals) say we are sick and put us in prison to “protect society,” and to rehabilitate us. What these criminologists are saying gives us a clue to who we are; that if you are trying to rehabilitate someone, what you are trying to do is: Restore him to what he was before he went wrong.

What were we then, before we “went wrong”? Take a look around you; do you see any street vendors, DuPonts, or Rockefeller elites? That is the way we are. Criminologists do not understand this because we have been struggling in the heavily imperialist context of the world today. We are the continuation or societies of peoples’ suffering, and they are the few rich owners whose force of the world’s work is essential.

Criminologists (people who study crime and criminals) say we are sick and put us in prison to “protect society,” and to rehabilitate us. What these criminologists are saying gives us a clue to who we are; that if you are trying to rehabilitate someone, what you are trying to do is: Restore him to what he was before he went wrong.

Who am I and why am I in prison?

If I wasn’t you and I who are prisoners would be someone else, because under capitalism crime must exist and prisons are therefore necessary. This is why rehabilitation is a sham. The capitalist knows he can’t cure crime, so he goes through the motions of trying to. And in doing this he tells people that it is the prisoner who is sick and that the system—which is really what is sick—is alright. But this doesn’t mean there is no such thing as rehabilitation. There is real rehabilitation, which is returning to the working class; we came from as a staunch fighter in the struggle against this sick system.

This brings us to the importance of answering the two questions: Who am I and why am I in prison? The only way you will tell you that they what you’re doing when you get home. The struggle doesn’t end when you walk out of the gate—it only begins on a different level. Continue to struggle! Contact us in any of our branch cities (see listing on page 16), or write to our National Office and maybe we could arrange to meet you somewhere. There are always lots of activities going on in which your participation could be a big help. Or there are classes on revolutionary politics you could join.

Getting Out Soon?

Are you being released soon? If so, you can still receive the Torch/La Antorcha FREE for six months.

Just let us know where to send it.

We are providing these FREE six-month subscriptions because we know that when you get out, you don’t necessarily have the money for a paid subscription. And we don’t want to lose you just because you’re out now. In fact, we want and need to tighten our relationship with you—and convince you to join us in building a revolutionary socialist party.

When you’re back on the street, why not pass your copy of the Torch/La Antorcha around? One of the best ways you can help build the Revolutionary Socialist League is by introducing people to our newspaper. And let us know who you could contact to bring this into their lives. Let us know if you’d like to help us expand our service to those in need.

It is definitely a relationship there.

This leads us to a solution to the question: Why are we prisoners? Under the capitalist system the economy goes through periodic crises, because on the one hand capitalists want to pay workers as little as possible so they can make the most profit, and on the other hand, they want workers to buy back the things they are producing, the highest price possible. When the prices are too high for the workers to buy up what has been produced, the capitalist produces less, and since he produces less, he needs less workers than he already has: So he starts laying people off, which creates competition among workers for the few jobs that are still available.

In such a crisis it is clearly the workers who do the suffering, and this is why prisons are necessary. Because if you can’t get what you need by working, you get it anyway you can. The capitalists can’t escape this dilemma, so they build prisons to protect themselves against the workers who resort to crime to get what they need.

The working class also glorifies crime. Movies, television, and in books, so Our goal and the form the titles that will take place in the future. In the past prisoners have waged an heroic struggle against oppressive conditions in prison. And this struggle has taken the form of strikes, lock-ins, and even open rebellion such as the Attica uprising in 1971. These actions usually centered around demands for better living conditions, higher wages, etc., in short, immediate needs. But this isn’t the struggle ends, for surely, our goal isn’t to reform prisons into a paradise.

Our goal should be the abolition of the capitalist system. The only way we can fight to eliminate this system is by uniting with the great masses of people who are exploited daily by that system—capitalism. Of course, we cannot unite physically with the working class while we are in prison, but we can show our unity by supporting the prison struggle and letting people know that we support their struggle, and the people in the streets will support our struggle against the oppressive conditions in prison.

In the final analysis it is the same enemy and the same fight which confronts both prisoners and workers, so we must unite to fight the common enemy.

Since we are in prison we must use the means we have at our disposal to bring the struggle forward. And one of the ways we can do this is by studying the conditions that exist and the best way to advance the struggle. We should gain an understanding of what capitalism is, how exploitation takes place, and what are the best weapons to combat that exploitation. If we can do this we will be arming ourselves for the battle that will take place in the future. We can also arm ourselves by building unity among ourselves here in prison, and organize ourselves into little groups or watch against infringement of other groups. This is why prisons struggle has taken the form of struggle forward. And one of the reasons we are here.

‘We must take our place.’

Another thing we must deal with is the fact that some day most of us will be going back to the mainstream of society, and we have to decide, now what we are going to do when we get out. Will we go back to crime or will we once again become part of the working class? If we go back to crime we are only perpetuating the system which puts us in prison in the first place, and we are taking the chance of going back to prison if we get caught—every one of us knows that if you are into a hustle sooner or later you will get busted, and this is reflected in the saying “if you want to play, you got to pay.”

On the other hand, if you return to the ranks of the revolutionary working class you will be struggling toward the inevitable overthrow of the whole system which makes prisoners necessary, and therefore you will be taking a course which advances your own interests and the interests of the class you belong to—the great multi-national working class.

To sum up what has been said then: The majority of prisoners are definitely from the working class, and therefore have great revolutionary potential. Once we realize this, the road ahead is much clearer—we must take our place beside our brothers and sisters in the street, who are struggling to get this oppressive system off our backs and write a new page in the history of revolution. If we do this, if we all unite to fight the common enemy, no oppressive system, no matter how strong, will be able to resist the will of the people in their revolutionary struggle.

Auburn State Prison
New York

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New Charges Against Autoworker Who Shot Racist Foreman

CHICAGO—The Cook County State's Attorney has changed charges against Brother Jearl Wood from aggravated assault to one count of attempted murder, one count of armed violence and two counts of aggravated battery. Wood, a Black worker from Ford's Chicago assembly plant, and his supporters first learned of the new heavy charges on November 7.

Wood was an assembler in Ford's Trim Department on afternoon shift until he was fired this summer for shooting slavedriver General Foreman Cecil Harrell.

Harrell had been harassing Wood for almost two years. On August 22, Harrell abused Wood with racist remarks and railroaded him out of the plant. Wood did not even get a hearing at Labor Relations. Nor did he receive any union representation. Returning a few minutes later, Wood shot and wounded Harrell. Later that night, Wood gave himself up voluntarily.

The heavier charges against Wood point out the need to build stronger support for Wood and his co-workers and friends. Supporters of Wood at Ford agree that he should not have to take the rap for defending himself against the harassment that many co-workers receive and especially against Harrell's racist abuse.

Ford management knew what kind of person Cecil Harrell was and how he drove the workers under him. This is a central issue in the struggle to free Jearl Wood. Many of Wood's co-workers do not yet understand this. They incorrectly believe the main issue is how Brother Wood handled Harrell's harassment and racist provocation on August 22. But this is not the first time an autoworker has responded to management harassment by shooting a foreman. For example, in the last 10 years, James Johnson, like Jernigan, Robert "Smitty" Smith and other autoworkers did the same thing. This type of incident can happen again so long as Ford keeps abusive slavedrivers on staff. This type of incident is also likely to happen until United Auto Workers Local 551 has an active policy of getting foremen like Harrell fired. (Wood is a member of UAW Local 551.)

Co-workers and family members have attended court proceedings with Jearl Wood on September 25, October 17, and November 7 and 10. Brother Wood's case is continued to the Sixth District in the courtroom of Judge George M. Marovich, 16501 S. Kedzie, Markham, Illinois, on Tuesday, November 18, at 9 a.m. Be there!

Jamaican Workers Support Jearl Wood

Brother Jearl, we have read about the racism and victimization which you have experienced in the current issue of the Torch/La Antorcha, our sister organization in the U.S. We in the Standing Strike Support Committee of the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica are in full solidarity with you in your struggle for freedom and justice. The attack on Brother Jearl by the capitalists of Ford, Motor Company and the capitalistic courts of the U.S. are part of the efforts by the International capitalist class to make the International working class and especially its most oppressed sections (such as Blacks, Latins, women, etc.) pay for the present crisis of the worldwide capitalist system.

Here in Jamaica, the working and oppressed people have to be daily resisting the capitalist attacks in the shape of layoffs, price increases, police and military brutality, etc. However, time and again these working class struggles are cut short due to the trade union misleaders who sell off the workers' rights to the capitalists.

We encourage you to keep up the fight and to see your fight as part of a worldwide struggle to smash the system of capitalist wage slavery, which is keeping us in bondage, once and for all. Our task is to unite all class-conscious working people around the world into an international revolutionary communist party to lead this struggle for international socialist revolution.

We are firmly with you in your fight for freedom. We hope that you will join us and our comrades of the RSL in the fight for freedom of all the world's working and oppressed peoples.

Yours for the socialist revolution, Patsy Christie Chairperson, SSSC Steering Committee

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

Dallas strikers face defeat

As we go to press, a strike by over 600 transit workers in Dallas, Texas, is apparently headed for defeat. The workers, who belong to Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1338, walked off their jobs on October 1, over the city's refusal to settle a long list of unresolved grievances. The strike was a major challenge to the state's anti-labor laws, which ban public employee strikes, collective bargaining and union contracts for public workers.

The walkout was also a threat to the ruling Dallas business community. A group of bankers and business leaders, the Dallas Citizen's Council, which has handpicked all city council delegates for 40 years beginning in 1936, still dominates the city's political life. The council has turned the city into an anti-union stronghold; only eight percent of the workers in Dallas are unionized.

In line with this policy, the officials of the Dallas Transit System (DTS) refused to negotiate with the union. They also fired 47 workers, announcing that they could re-employ for their jobs but would lose their accumulated seniority. During the strike scabs and supervisory cops kept a skeleton bus system running. Although the strike is still going on, 75 mechanics and 150 drivers have agreed to return to work under the DTS conditions. About 800 contractors kept holding out for an amnesty, including retention of their seniority rights. But the DTS says it will retain the scab drivers hired during the strike. If the strike is not won, over half of the 340 striking drivers are likely to lose their jobs.

Bus drivers win in Boston

School bus drivers in Boston voted to return to work on November 2 following a militant three-week wildcat strike against ARA Services, a private firm hired by the school board to implement Boston's court-ordered busing plan. The drivers, members of United Steelworkers of America Local 8751, walked off their jobs on October 9 to protest both ARA's failure to observe safety and maintenance procedures required by law, and its systematic violations of their union contract. They were supported by Boston's Black community, which recognized that the strikers' demands were in the interests of their children.

The company reacted to the strike with a union-busting campaign that included court injunctions and the firing of 19 drivers—including the entire union executive board and stewards' council. In the settlement the company was forced to hire the fired drivers, while the issues that set off the strike went into arbitration.

In earlier events related to the busing struggle, Gerald O'Leary, a member of the school board who supports the racist anti-busing campaign, was arrested on October 2 and charged with demanding $650,000 from ARA for giving it the busing contract. On the same day, white gangs attacked Black students at South Boston High School. The South Boston Information Center, which is leading the anti-busing movement, recently organized a white boycott of the school.

Sydenham shut after protests

Sydenham Hospital, which served residents of New York's Harlem community, was shut down by the city on November 1. Earlier city attempts to close the hospital had provoked a militant mass response by community activists, including a 10-day occupation of the hospital's emergency room in September. But after police ejected the group occupying the hospital on September 26, leaders of the Coalition to Save Sydenham (CSS), which had led the struggle to save the hospital, abandoned the fight. Instead, they began to talk with a set of real local and national Democratic Party leaders; they promised to help get out the vote for the Democratic ticket in the November elections in return for federal funding for the hospital.

As part of this maneuver, the CSS leaders called their last rally for the afternoon of October 30, the day President Carter was scheduled to visit the city, even though it was a weekday and working people in the community would not be able to attend. When the union leaders refused to come to the rally, the CSS leaders called it off altogether. The CSS's losing effort to play political games with the Democratic Party contributed to the failure of the mass campaign to save Sydenham. It also crippled the opportunity to use the Sydenham struggle as the basis for building a citywide movement against the cutbacks in social services.

—PB
Union Contracts Won at J.P. Stevens After 17 Years of Struggle

By WILLIAM FALK

On October 19, one of the most notorious anti-union companies in the country, J.P. Stevens, signed its first contracts ever with workers represented by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). Stevens is the nation's second largest textile maker, employing about 36,000 hourly workers in 81 different plants, almost all of them in the South. Previously, the company had successfully resisted signing a union contract, despite 17 years of active organizing efforts. During this period, Stevens became a symbol to labor and management alike of corporate opposition to union efforts to organize in the South.

In the settlement itself the ACTWU won only modest gains for the workers it represents. Some 3,500 workers in 10 plants in North Carolina, South Carolina and Alabama won union recognition, grievance and arbitration procedures, seniority rights, and a dues check-off system. These workers will also receive retroactive wage increases equal to the hikes Stevens granted its non-union workers at other plants to hinder union organizing at these facilities. In addition, union workers will now receive any wage increases or benefits granted by the company to non-union plants in the future. Finally, the company agreed to sign similar contracts with any plants organized by the union over the next 18 months.

In return for these gains, the ACTWU leaders agreed that for the next 18 months their organizers would not use their court-ordered right to enter plant canteen break areas and other company property to organize. This is a concession that may seriously hamper future organizing drives. The union leaders also promised to end both their consumer boycott against Stevens' products and their “corporate campaign” against isolating Stevens in the business world. The union also agreed not to single out J.P. Stevens in future organizing campaigns.

Despite these concessions, the signing of a contract at Stevens is a real victory. In the most immediate sense, unionized Stevens workers have won recognition for the first time, and will have a better chance to organize other plants in the future.

On a broader level, the Stevens victory could contribute to opening up the South for union organizers. At present, only around 10 percent of Southern workers belong to unions. Consequently, wage scales in the region are low, while management has more freedom to impose miserable working conditions, to hire and fire at will, etc. Hundreds of corporations have moved all or part of their operations to the South in recent years to take advantage of these factors. Meanwhile, many unionized workers in the North are developing an arsenal of weapons to defeat the union. For example, the company refused to bargain seriously with the union or sign any contracts. It fired or punished pro-union workers, and actively incited racist attitudes among the white workers to divide them from the Black workers. At the same time, relying on local anti-union government officials to intimidate union supporters. In Middlesville, Georgia, for instance, streets are over.” Although the ACTWU sent out organizers to sign up members, it did not give these efforts the necessary resources or backing.

In addition, the ACTWU's main efforts went to a three-pronged strategy that left rank and file workers with little to do. The primary tactics were: 1) an official AFL-CIO boycott of Stevens products; 2) a barrage of lawsuits and Labor Relations Act complaints against the company; and 3) the "corporate campaign," which was aimed at pressuring the more liberal capitalists in the Northeast, with whom the ACTWU has had a friendly relationship for years, to press Stevens to agree to a compromise settlement.

Of these tactics, the boycott was probably the least effective. Only about one-third of Stevens products are sold retail and even these are sold under several different brand names. In practice the boycott usually boiled down to printing "Don't Buy Stevens" notices in various union newspapers, rather than an effort to mobilize trade union support for the Stevens workers.

The ACTWU's victory is one of the most important in the recent history of the union movement. In the years before the court verdict they had usually moved and found new jobs.

Corporate campaign hurt companies

The corporate campaign was the most effective part of the union's strategy. In one successful action, two Stevens executives were forced to resign from the board of directors of the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Bank after the ACTWU and other unions threatened to withdraw millions of dollars in union funds from the bank.

In another, the chairman of the New York Life Insurance Company quit the Stevens board of directors while the chairman of Stevens left the board of New York Life, after the ACTWU planned to contest the elections to the board of directors of New York Life. The union challenge would have forced the company to spend several million dollars mailing ballots to every New York Life policy holder.

Overall, the union's legalistic approach was one of the reasons it took so long to force Stevens to agree to a contract. Yet, in the end, the persistence of the Stevens workers paid off.

In January 1980, Whitney Stevens took over as chairman of the company and began angiing for a deal with the union. He felt that the company, which was losing ground to its competitors, had become too preoccupied with the union-busting campaign. Moreover, he recognized that the ACTWU's history of settling for weak contracts, it was possible to accept a settlement which would cost Stevens very little, while freeing top managers to restore the company's competitive edge.

The ultimate effects of the ACTWU's victory remain to be seen. Stevens has already talked about opposing union organizing efforts, while promising to "play by the rules" from now on. The ACTWU leadership, judging by their previous behavior, is hardly likely to mobilize Southern textile workers for the mass rank and file-controlled organizing drive at Stevens or anywhere else. It will be up to the workers themselves to extend the recent contract victory while overcoming its limitations.
How the System Robbed a Working Class Mother of Her Baby

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

Here is an example of how backward, racist, and mixed up the government/welfare/medical system is:

In March, this year, I delivered a healthy baby at a major hospital. One month later, protective services (the police/state arm) of social services took my baby from me under a temporary court order. The fact that I had only just been laid off from CETA in early March made no difference. What was seen was that I was obviously a poor, white, unwed, working class woman, and therefore unfit to be a mother.

I HAD never been on welfare (ADC, general relief) in my life. During the days when I was carrying my baby, I was working and going to the prenatal clinic wing of the maternity hospital. My visits were paid for by an agency of the government. My hospital bill was paid for by Medicaid. That was the only assistance that I got.

I was never informed of my rights. I was sent to see the "high-risk" clinic for an excessive thyroid problem. After an argument (a silly one) with one of the clinic doctors, he asked me to see a clinic psychiatrist. I refused. A clinic psychiatrist was sent to see me anyway. I was never told of my rights.

Finally a psychiatrist came in to see me. He told me that I was alright, I should see family services, enjoy my life, and my baby. My baby was released to me and everything was fine.

Two weeks later, I was visited in my home by a so-called protective service worker. She asked me a personal question: Where was I from? Was I where my family? etc. On her second visit, I mentioned that the baby had only gained an ounce in two weeks. When I took him in for his two-week-old check-up at the hospital-family clinic, I was assured he was doing okay.

The second visit by the protective service worker was short. She told me good-bye, that there was no need to be followed-up anymore. Two days later, she called me and demanded that I go with her to take the baby to the hospital because of his low weight gain. I was being fed him at the time. I said I had my first-month clinic appointment for him in three days. I would check him there. In my family, there is a history of hereditary disease like the sickle cell anemia that many Black families have.

FIVE HOURS later, the protective service worker showed up at my home with another worker and two cops and a court order to take my baby from me. One of the cops threatened to break down my door. I protested this treatment at the local police precinct but I never got any satisfaction.

The protective service worker told me that a hearing would be held in a few days to determine whether I had neglected my baby. Till then, I could not get him back.

Through savings, contributions and loans from my friends and family, I managed to hire a good lawyer. The Revolutionary Socialist League helped me to find this lawyer. I had been involved in a rent strike throughout the previous spring, summer, and fall and I had worked with lawyers then.

My one-month-old baby was taken away from me and sent to a hospital different than the maternity hospital he was born in. Now a new hospital was far from me. Vandals had wrecked my car and I had to rely on the transportation and rides from friends and family members.

During the hearings that followed, I learned that my baby's medical terms floated around like "failure-to-thrive," "possible neglect," "possible harm to the baby's life." I was becoming more and more concerned that my baby had this hereditary disease. Doctors and the social worker all agreed that that was ruled out—he did not have the disease. Still I wondered.

Because the protective services and doctors were able to show probable cause that I had neglected my baby, I was allowed to visit him and breast-feed him once a week when it was "convenient" for his social worker.

AT THE FIRST hearing, no evidence was presented, so no judgment was made. The court ordered me to a medical release for my son or me or else. "You will never get your baby back," I signed on my lawyer's advice.

The doctor who originally argued with me and referred me to a psychiatrist told me I was alright. I should come back Friday. I then said I needed psychiatric help. No "help" was given to me. Instead, the court refereed a "study" done on me. This was the lack of a revolutionary party to fight for. As they see fit. The privileged ruling class and working people must live. This is why we workers must be organized in a revolutionary party to tear down capitalisms walls and build society where working people can live free and decent lives.

Sincerely,
LM
Ohio

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Chicago's Cook County Hospital Bans Abortions

By NATASHA BELL

The latest in a long series of attacks on public health care for the poor in Chicago during the spring of 1980, George W. Dunne, president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, advised the administrative staff at Cook County Hospital that no more abortions were to be performed in that facility, except when the mother's life was in danger.

NOT EVEN the other members of the County Board, who oversee the operation of Cook County Hospital, the major public health care facility in Chicago, had taken part in making the decision.

When County Hospital's executive staff and House Staff Association submitted a resolution to the Board condemning the abortion ban as discriminatory against poor and minority women, the Board was forced to take up the question at its regular meeting on October 10. On that date, more than 200 people on both sides of the abortion issue crowded into the usually very crowded Board meeting room.

Before anyone in the audience was allowed to speak, it was announced that Dunne had already referred the issue to the Hospital Subcommittee.

In a later statement to the press, County Commissioner John Stroger, chairman of the subcommittee, promised to call for public hearings "sometime in November." Stroger, who is Black and considered one of the more liberal commissioners, also stated: "I think President Dunne did the right thing. I'm pro-life... but I will conduct an objective hearing."

To date no such hearing has been scheduled.

Few women, however, for whom County Hospital is the only health care they can afford, will find comfort in the sexist lip-service that this commissioner gives to "objectivity."

The most tragic part of this attack on both the right of all people to decent health care and the right of women to control their own bodies has been the lack of an organized militant response by the working class and minority women. In fact, it is due precisely to the lack of militant women's movement that President Dunne was able to get away with his decision in the first place.

It should be clear to all poor, working class, Black and Latin women by now that we have no rights under capitalism—only oppression. We know that the ruling class considers privileges, to be given or taken away as they see fit. The privileged ruling class and its stooges such as the Cook County Board of Commissioners give us up as much as they are pressured and forced to. Rather than beg them to give us back what should have been ours all along, the truth is, we will only get what we are willing to fight for. [ ]

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Last August, the workers of Poland rose up in a rebellion that brought the country's state-capitalist ruling class to its knees. In the face of a nationwide strike wave involving hundreds of thousands of workers, the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) on August 31 promised sweeping economic and social reforms, including the right to form unions independent of party and state control.

However, the Polish workers emerged from this struggle with only a partial victory. The PUWP survived the rebellion with its monopoly of political power intact. The Gdansk Inter-Factory Strike Committee, which led the strikes, agreed not to form an opposition political party. It also promised to respect the Polish constitution, recognize the leading role of the PUWP in the state, and accept Russia's domination over Poland. Moreover, the settlement protects the existence of the government-controlled official unions, and grants the Polish courts jurisdiction over the independent unions.

In early September, in reviewing the outcome of the Polish struggle, we stated that "The recent settlement represents at most only a temporary truce in the Polish class struggle." Events have confirmed this. The Polish rulers have used their total control over the state apparatus to try to undermine the gains won by the workers. The workers, organized in part into the new independent union federation, Solidarnosc (Solidarity), have resisted these attempts and continued to fight for the realization of what they won on paper in August.

The situation in Poland thus remains extremely unstable. If the Polish workers are not prepared for the confrontations that lie ahead, the state-capitalist ruling class—with the backing of its Russian overseers—will consolidate its rule and roll back the gains already won. In this situation, there is every reason to expect that the regime will unleash a reign of terror against the most militant sections of the Polish working class, marking a defeat for the entire international working class in its quest for freedom.

We are devoting the center section of this month's Torch/La Antorcha to the workers' struggle in Poland. The first article discusses what has happened since the settlement was signed in August, including the state of the workers' movement. The second article explains why the Polish workers' struggle disproves the social-democratic contention that lasting, meaningful gains can be won through a reform of the system, rather than its revolutionary overthrow.

**Polish Workers Clash With Gov't Over Independent Trade Unions**

By PAUL BENJAMIN

The agreement that was signed between striking workers and the Polish state-capitalist government this past August 31 did not end the struggle of the Polish people for economic and social reforms.

Since August 31, large sections of the Polish population have followed the workers' lead and begun to organize to fight for their own interests. In particular, peasants in Poland's 80 percent privately owned agricultural sector have begun to form farmers' unions. For example, in mid-October peasants from the countryside around the capital of Warsaw met at the village of Zbrosza to form such a union. (Manchester Guardian, October 16, 1980.) Teachers, journalists, scientists and a host of other groups have also formed unions and are pressing their own demands on the government. Even some rank and file members of the ruling party, the misleadingly named Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), are demanding more voice in choosing the party leadership.

But the focal point of the struggle has been the registration of the new, independent unions by the Polish courts, a move required by the August 31 settlement.

After the signing of that agreement, up to eight million workers abandoned the official government-controlled unions to join Solidarnosc (Solidarity), the independent union federation led by strike leader Lech Walesa. While Solidarnosc drew up its constitution to submit to the courts, plant managers and local PUWP officials launched a campaign of harassment against Solidarnosc supporters, provoking a wave of local strikes. In Kielce, workers at a plant walked off their jobs on September 12 after the plant manager warned that they would be fired if they reorganized. Strikes also took place in Kalisz, Bialystok, Lodz, Myszkow and other cities. (New York Times, September 12, 1980.) On September 24, Solidarnosc submitted its constitution for registration by the court. For one month, the court sat on the application.

On October 24, the court finally acted on Solidarnosc's application and registered the union. However, before doing so the judge added a clause to its constitution giving the government representation at the union's congresses. These politicians even opposed appealing the judge's ruling to higher courts. Walesa himself was against a strike, but supported a legal appeal, and called for setting up a workers' commission to draw up their grievances and meet with the government.

These differences within the Solidarnosc movement first surfaced at the end of Walesa's tour of southern Poland, at a national committee meeting held in Jastrzebie on October 20. At the meeting representatives from Gdansk, Warsaw and Walbrzych took the lead in arguing that only strike action or the threat of strikes would force the government into registering the union and implementing the other promises included in the settlement. According to reports in Le Monde (October 22, 1980), the Gdansk workers also criticized the Jastrzebie committee for compromising the union's independence by cooperating too much with the government, and for trying to expand its jurisdiction at the expense of other committees in the region. In reply, delegates from Jastrzebie, Szczecin and Lodz argued that their critics had "fallen into the habit" of strikes, and that their threats would provoke the government into abandoning the settlement.

These differences represent in part the varying levels of militancy existing in different regions of the country. Workers in northern Poland, particularly around Gdansk, tend to reject any compromise which weakens the settlement. As one Gdansk worker said: "Gdansk is very militant, and the workers are even more militant. If we introduced what people are saying in the factories, the rest of the national commission would runaway." (New York Times, November 7, 1980.) The Gdansk workers and their supporters appear to include about one-third of the national commission, drawn mainly from the largest factories and industrial centers. However, they wield an authority outweighing their numbers, stemming from their leadership of the rebellion. Workers in the south, on the other hand, joined the rebellion only in its final stages, and have tended to follow a more conciliatory strategy.

In the interests of maintaining a solid front against the government, on October 28 the delegates adopted a compromise resolution that included the threat of a strike on November 12, as well as a further court action. They also drew up 10 demands, including government acceptance of the original statutes, publication of them with a notice that the court amendments had been rejected, and registration of the peasant organization.

(Continued on next page)
angry workers demonstrate outside Warsaw courthouse following October 24 ruling which amended Solidarnosc statutes.

(Continued from previous page)

affiliated with Solidarnosc (which had been denied registration on the grounds that it wasn't a workers' organization) and release of printing equipment and other supplies sent to Solidarnosc from abroad but held up at the border by customs officials. (Le Monde, October 29, 1980.)

Tensions mounted throughout Poland over the next two weeks. On November 6, Solidarnosc announced plans for a series of protest strikes if the Supreme Court rejected its appeal. The government warned against new strikes and attacked "counterrevolutionaries" in the independent trade unions. On November 9, Polish television showed Russian and Polish soldiers and tanks in joint military maneuvers in an obvious threat against the workers, and turned back foreign reporters with visas trying to enter the country.

But the next day the Supreme Court ruled that the lower court "had no right" to amend the statutes. It accepted the union's proposal to add an "annex" to the statutes reaffirming the pledges of loyalty contained in the original Gdansk settlement. This "court decision" was actually the result of a compromise hammered out between union and government negotiators only hours before the ruling. Nevertheless, it represents another retreat by the PUWP.

"Thus the PUWP leadership remains on the defensive in the face of the growing workers' movement, Stanislaw Kania, who replaced Edward Gierek as First Secretary of the PUWP and effective ruler of the country in September, has promised over and over again that the settlement is "irreversible." He has also promised to reorganize the economy, wage a campaign against corrupt government and party officials, loosen censorship regulations and promote more democracy within the PUWP itself. The government has already granted some concrete concessions, such as cutting the workweek from six to five days, and providing wage increases for most Polish workers by the end of October rather than spreading them out through next June as originally planned.

But the ruling class's ultimate goal is to undermine the independent unions and the August 31 agreement as a whole. As the accompanying article explains, "it is the unions controlled by the workers themselves to undermine the very basis of state capitalist rule in Poland."

In addition, the ruling class cannot satisfy the economic demands of the workers on a long-term basis. It faces a major economic crisis which includes a $20 billion foreign debt, a 16 percent rate of inflation, and food and material shortages. Meanwhile, production of coal, sugar beets, potatoes and other goods needed to pay off foreign debt has dropped 20 percent because of the concessions won by the workers. The Kania regime has no choice but to discipline the workers—including taking away gains already won—if it is to stabilize the economy.

The Polish government is also under enormous pressure from the Russian and East European state-capitalist rulers to roll back the workers' gains. In October, political leaders in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania issued warnings that they were ready to come to the aid of Polish "communists" against "anti-socialist" elements. (New York Times, October 21, 1980.) The East German government went so far as to severely limit travel between the two countries on October 28.

These rulers fear that the Polish revolution will spread into their own countries unless it is checked, just as other East European revolts have spread in the past. In 1953, an uprising by East German workers set off major demonstrations in Poland and strikes in Hungary. And in 1956, mass strikes in Poland inspired the Hungarian workers' rebellion. There are already a few signs that the latest Polish revolt is having the same effect. In Estonia, a country on Poland's eastern border conquered by Russia in World War II, students in Tallinn staged demonstrations in early October. Estonian exiles in Sweden also reported that workers in Tartu went on strike against higher production quotas.

These fears were the motive behind the meeting between Kania, Prime Minister Pinkowski and Russian Communist Party boss Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow on October 23. After these leaders issued a joint statement in which Russia pledged its confidence in the "socialist regime," the meaning of this statement is that the Russian rulers have agreed to give Kania, whose earlier attempts to sabotage the independent unions have failed, more time to gain control over the Polish workers through peaceful means.

Since the Kania/Brezhnev meeting, therefore, a new strategy appears to be emerging. This approach involves the ruling elite "accepting" the existence of the independent unions, while devoting its major efforts toward trying to bring them under control—that is, make them independent in name only. To this end, Henryk Szablik, a PUWP leader in Warsaw, has called on party members to join the new unions and work actively to ensure their loyalty to the government. (Economist, November 1, 1980.) Another aspect of the new strategy has been articulated by Mikolaj Rakowski, a member of the PUWP Central Committee. Rakowski has advocated a strategy of trying to isolate the militant wing of Solidarnosc by offering the country "co-responsibility in the exercise of power" if it accepts the leading role of the PUWP. (Le Monde, October 8, 1980.)

In other words, the ruling class would make a deal with Lech Walesa and other reformist leaders of the unions that would give them official power and status, but only at the price of Walesa and Co. agreeing to use the unions to discipline the workers in the interests of "solving Poland's economic problems," that is, stabilizing Polish state capitalism. If such a deal could be arranged, the state capitalists hope to use the new unions as a buffer between the working class and the government, even though this would undoubtedly mean civil war.

Walesa clamps lid on militant actions

Many signs point to a willingness on the part of Walesa, some section of the Solidarnosc leadership, and opposition groups which support them, to go along with the rulers' cooptative strategy. Walesa himself declared at the first national meeting of Solidarnosc in September that the workers "have to help" party leaders who are willing to negotiate with them, saying: "They aren't all bad, and some deserve our consideration." (Intercontinental Press, October 13, 1980.) During his southern tour, he argued that while continuing to organize their unions the workers must avoid confrontations that strengthen the hands of the hardline elements in the PUWP. They should counter the press blackout of their activities by boycotting the mass media, and criticize the delay in registering Solidarnosc by a mass letter-writing campaign to the court. (Le Monde, October 22, 1980.)

To carry out this strategy Walesa and other Solidarnosc leaders have tried to clamp a lid on the more militant wing of the workers' movement. Walesa personally intervened to end a wildcat strike at the Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw after returning from his tour. He called strikes "useless" and a danger not only to the economy, and claims they must be used only as a last resort. (Le Monde, October 22, 1980.)

"Thus Walesa has become increasingly isolated from the Gdansk workers who catapulted him into the leadership of the recent mass strikes. This becomes evident at the meetings in Jastrzebie and later in Gdansk itself, where Walesa opposed their calls for
Workers in Poland Win With Reform Strategy?

Workers' struggles have been escalating in Poland and have drawn the attention of the world. The workers, united under Solidarnosc, have been fighting for their rights and the reform of the state-capitalist system. The workers' demands include better wages, improved working conditions, and the right to organize. The government has been resisting these demands, leading to a series of strikes and protests. The workers'团结 is growing stronger, and they are becoming more organized. The situation in Poland is becoming increasingly tense, and the future is uncertain. But the workers are determined to continue their struggle for a better life and a more democratic society. They are proving that the capitalist system is not invincible and that workers' power can bring about change. The workers' victory in Poland is a testament to the strength of the working class and their ability to organize and fight for their rights. The world is watching as Poland's workers continue their struggle.
(Continued from previous page) anxious to deny the workers any democratic rights, particularly the right to organize independently of the state and the party, that is, to organize themselves at all.

With this in mind, it should be obvious that the Polish ruling class has absolutely no intention—today or at any other time—of granting the workers the right to freely establish independent trade unions. They know that independent trade unions and the continued rule of their own class are incompatible. To accept the permanent presence of such unions would be to voluntarily seal their own doom, to commit collective suicide, something which no ruling class in history has ever done.

If, at the present time, the Polish state capitalists appear to be willing to allow the workers to set up their own unions, this is not because they have reconciled themselves to the presence of such institutions. It is because they have decided that such an appearance is an essential part of a strategy to prevent the workers from winning independent unions; the rulers need the time and the opportunity to regain the initiative and smash the workers and their unions.

At the present time, the Polish bureaucrats, along with their Russian backers, do not want to take the risk of militaristic action to crush the workers. They are afraid that any such action on the part of the Russian army might not be effective, since it is not clear that Polish soldiers would fire on their brothers and sisters in state-controlled industries. That intervention on the part of the Russian army might unite them like a storm in the history of Poland against such an invasion, and thus to make the mass rising turn Poland into a bloody battlefield, threaten state-capitalist rule throughout Eastern Europe, destroy what is left of detente with the West, and drive world closer to World War III. While such costs do not necessarily rule out a Russian invasion at some point in the future, they are sufficient to convince the Polish bureaucrats and their Russian counterparts to play out their non-military options to defeat the workers’ movement. If these non-military approaches don’t work, however, and the workers continue to strike and organize, the Polish state capitalists and their Russian backers will certainly resort to direct military means to defeat the workers’ movement.

In sum, the two assumptions upon which the social democrats base their contention that the events in Poland prove the viability of their approach—that independent unions have already been won and that the Polish ruling class can be forced to accept the long-term existence of these unions—are false.

**Workers’ leaders pursue reformist course**

Unfortunately, it is not just the social democrats outside Poland who have failed to see the events in Poland in their proper perspective. While they know that independent unions have already been won, the most prominent leaders of the struggles in Poland, Lech Walesa and his allies in Solidarnosc, as well as Jaruzelski of KGB, have based their entire strategy on the same reformist assumptions. As a result, they are leading the Polish workers to almost certain defeat.

In addition to the notion that it is possible to win independent trade unions within the context of state capitalism, Walesa’s strategy is based on a related, equally dubious, assumption. This is the idea that there is a section of the state-capitalist bureaucracy in Poland which wants a substantial liberalization of the Polish regime and hence is an ally of the workers.

As far as we know, no such section of the bureaucracy exists. There are certainly differences within the ruling class over how to respond to the present crisis; some bureaucrats undoubtedly prefer taking a hard line against the workers, others want to make concessions.

But those who advocate making concessions to the workers propose to do this not because they favor the concessions, but because they believe that by making concessions today they can more effectively take away the concessions tomorrow. To see such bureaucrats as allies of the workers is therefore ludicrous.

Past Polish leaders Wladislav Gomulka and Edward Gierek came to power in the wake of the worker uprising as “soft-liberals,” promising concessions to the workers. Yet neither of them made concessions as soon as they had succeeded in derailing the mass movement. Instead, they continued the concessions as long as they could, with the workers’ support, and then replaced the workers with new “soft-liberals” who, of course, did not concede any concessions. Thus, these “soft-liberals” were not genuine concessions to the workers; they were simply a new way of binning the workers. This is precisely the way in which the current liberalization program has been implemented in Poland.

The workers are therefore no allies of the workers. Where they pretend to support the workers’ interests it is to use the concessions as a political ploy, a way of getting rid of the workers’ opponents within the state-capitalist bureaucracy. Once the concessions are won, the workers are the ones who get the workers’ support, and the workers are the ones who lose. The workers are the ones who lose, because the concessions are won, and the workers are the ones who lose.

Nevertheless, it is this that makes Walesa and those in the Solidarnosc leadership who agree with him appear to be doing. To put such a strategy into practice, they are pursuing a course that will undercut and eventually destroy the workers’ movement itself.

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**Market forces in the economy.** Market forces in the economy. It may be, but not, involve easing, but not, eliminating, censorship and giving people, particularly the Intellectuals, a bit more leeway. Rather than improving the living standards of the workers and increasing their hold over the economy, the purpose of such “liberalization,” whether in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or Hungary today, has been to “improve” state capitalism, that is, raise productivity, worsen working conditions and increase unemployment—all in all, to improve the ability of the ruling class to pump surplus value out of the workers and accumulate capital.

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El Salvador

Right-Wing Junta Takes the Offensive

By FRANZ MARTIN

NOVEMBER 6—Since the August general strike called by leftist forces in El Salvador, the ruling rightist military-Christian Democratic junta has launched an offensive against the national liberation movement.

Late in October, the rural northeastern province of Morazán was sealed off by government troops while an army of 5,000—reportedly including some U.S. military advisors—entered the area to disperse guerrilla forces. No reports have been allowed into Morazán since the offensive began, but reports from guerrilla and Catholic Church sources indicate that government troops are using helicopter gunships, incendiary bombs and napalm against the civilian peasant population. At least 40,000 have fled the area, by Red Cross estimates.

The government claims to have killed 150 guerrillas and destroyed several of their training camps.

Morazán and its neighboring provinces along the mountainous border with Honduras have been guerrilla strongholds for years. The recently formed Peoples Liberation Army, which is a joint military force of the left and the junta, claims to have 15,000 armed and trained combatants. About 3,000 of these are based in Morazán alone, according to most reports. The government uses this as a reason to keep the border closed indefinitely and to bar workers from entering the townships.

Joint military operation underway

The junta's military offensive was carefully timed to coincide with the signing of a peace treaty between El Salvador and the equally right-wing government of Honduras, which technically is at war with El Salvador for 11 years over a border dispute. This prevented them from solidifying their political/military alliance to control the leftist guerrillas who threaten both regimes. But immediately after the treaty was signed on October 30, both countries announced a joint military operation against the thousands of Salvadoran guerillas, both civilian and guerrilla, who have gathered in primitive camps along both sides of the Honduras border.

At the same time, the junta announced an extension of the state of siege which it has imposed on the country for over seven months. This "emergency measure" is designed to control the bloody civil war by crushing organizing efforts of the liberation forces. Among other things, it allows searches and arrests without warrants, prohibits street rallies and imposes strict press censorship.

U.S. sends aid to junta

In the minds of the rightist junta members, there are good reasons for optimism. First, the most recent major action by the junta has been attempted general strike in August—was not as successful as its leaders had hoped, largely because of intense government repression.

Second, the junta, which was once considered a center/right coalition, has been able to eliminate its remaining leftist forces without opposition. The group of younger, reform-minded officers who have emerged, is only now separating from Colonel Adolfo Majano. They have removed themselves from the Bush administration. The group (of which Majano is a member) holds similar political views, but has been able to organize itself and is now a separate political force.

Third, U.S. support for the junta has been reaffirmed. In fact, they have increased. This year, El Salvador has received $92 million in economic aid and $5.7 million in military aid from the U.S. In addition, the U.S. is training several hundred Salvadoran military officers in counter-insurgency techniques at a U.S. Army school in Panama.

Victims of terrorist attack lie unburied near San Miguel.

Iraq gaining in war against Iran

As we go to press, the Iraqi government, which invaded Iran on September 16, appears to be achieving its immediate objectives in the war. The Iraqis have captured the oil-rich province of Khorasan. On October 24, Iraqi troops captured the key oil town of Abadan and are currently besieging Abadan, the center of the Iranian oil industry. Iranian fuel supplies have fallen sharply as a result of the Iraqi gains and, as a result, the Iranian air force is flying fewer missions. Blackouts are occurring two or three times a day in Tehran because of lack of fuel for the city's oil-fired power station. On November 9, the Iranian government tripled gasoline prices to cut consumer consumption. However, Iraqi casualties are reported to be low, as fighting around Abadan, and President Saddam Hussein's ill have gone armed.

On October 16, the U.S. military advisors to the Iraqis announced the beginning of a large-scale military operation. The operation, which is called "Operation Desert Storm," is intended to destroy the Iranian forces in the oil-rich province of Khorasan.

New protests erupt in Azania

Black workers and students in Azania (South Africa) are continuing their struggle for freedom against the white minority ruling class. On November 7, Black students participating in a nationwide school boycott damaged 12 anti-riot vehicles during a struggle with police in New Brighton township, near Port Elizabeth. Four students were wounded in the fighting. In Soweto, over 3,000 people went into the streets on October 16 to protest a visit by Pieter Koornhof, the government's Minister for Black Affairs. Freedom fighters blew up railroad tracks in Soweto in conjunction with the demonstrations. Koornhof was made an "honorary citizen" of Soweto by the township's community council, a group of toadies who took office in elections boycotted by 94 percent of the voters shortly after the 1976 Soweto uprising. The award outraged Blacks in Soweto, who are denied citizenship in their own country under the white regime's racist apartheid system.

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Was It a Defeat for Socialism?

JLP Sweeps Jamaican Elections

Below we are printing a statement by the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica (RML), the sister organization of the RSL. It was written just after the general elections in Jamaica on November 30.

The RML wrote that the JLP had won the 1980 Jamaican general elections by a landslide; it looks as if the party will take 51 of the 60 seats in the parliament. The PNP, which won 43 of 60 seats in the 1976 general elections, has thereby gone down in a stunning defeat—a defeat which has seen 10 ministers in the previous PNP government, including PNP leader and former Prime Minister of Jamaica (JLP) and the PNP leader, Edward Seaga, sworn in as the new prime minister on November 1. Defeated in the election was the People's National Party (PNP) government led by Michael Manley. The article refers several times to the Workers' Party of Jamaica (WPJ). The WPJ is the country's major pro-Cuba, pro-Castro organization.

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A defeat for liberalism

In typical liberal fashion, the liberal capitalist PNP tried to deal with the crisis while balancing between the various social classes. It ended up pleasing nobody and losing support in all quarters.

This, in 1977 the PNP went to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan. While maintaining its radical anti-imperialist rhetoric and poses, under the agreement signed with the IMF, the PNP uncharacteristically bargained away its independence and lost control. The working masses were exposed to some of the most terrible social ills—no health care, no education, no safety regulations. Middle and working class people also experienced a deep drop in their living standards and a lessenning of their chances of "getting ahead" socially. The working people rebelled against these conditions through strikes, demonstrations and other forms of protest. For their part, growing numbers of middle class people turned away from Manley and the PNP. Meanwhile, a lot of the capitalists were satisfied even though the workers were being heavily attacked and they were guaranteed a 20 percent rate of profit. These capitalists wanted the PNP to maintain a government that would run Jamaica capitalism in a blunt and straightforward way. Consequently, they overwhelmingly backed the reactionary pro-imperialist JLP.

Particularly during the last two years, therefore, the PNP's popular support has decreased. The PNP supporters locally and abroad have pointed to right-wing propaganda, U.S. destabilization activities, capitalist sabotage and the party's mismanagement of its political, economic, social and security forces as reasons for the PNP's defeat. While these factors undoubtedly helped the JLP, the PNP's downfall fundamentally represents a defeat of that party's liberal capitalist policies. From its vacillating, right-wing imperialist policies, the PNP have been trying to win elections, while losing the working and oppressed people's trust.

Consequently, they overwhelmingly backed the reactionary pro-imperialist JLP.

A revolutionary working class policy needed

Only a bold revolutionary working class policy could carry out the massive layoffs and factory closures which have affected the country. The results are clear: the JLP has the power to provide answers to the persistent economic decline, widespread violence and civil strife, and other symptoms of the severe national crisis which has affected the country.

A victory for reaction

However the results are certain: a victory for the forces of reaction gathered around the JLP. It is highly noteworthy that the first official act of the new JLP government was the cancellation of the IMF loan. While the JLP thugs have been hounding PNP supporters out of government housing units, they have promised to implement a number of radical policies which may bring about a return to left-wing policies. This shows that the defeat of the conservative parties, the JLP and the PNP, has come about as a result of the increase in the working class's struggle against the domination of the world capitalist system.

The results of the elections are clear: the middle class is weak and its leadership is divided. The JLP and the PNP have been defeated. The JLP thugs have been hounding PNP supporters out of government housing units. Yet, as the JLP promised to take steps to stop the mass layoffs, they have not even made an appeal to its supporters to stop these layoffs. In some cases, members of the security forces and the army have been involved in carrying out these layoffs. This is a very serious matter. In its manifesto, the JLP promised to take steps to stop the security forces, including the police. (Continued on page 17)

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U.S.

Was It a Defeat for Socialism? (Continued)

The Jamaican elections brought the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) to power after eight years as the opposition. The JLP's leader, Edward Seaga, was sworn in as the new prime minister on November 1. Defeated in the election was the People's National Party (PNP) government led by Michael Manley. The article refers several times to the Workers' Party of Jamaica (WPJ). The WPJ is the country's major pro-Cuba, pro-Russia organization.

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U.S. Elections

(Continued from page 1)

advantaged than themselves—Blacks, Latinos, refugees, etc.—are getting all the benefits from the government, which in turn taxes the middle class to pay for the social programs. The capitalists are stirring up and using these sentiments to smash social services, to fight for less government regulation, and to push a tax package through a powerful tax structure which in reality would mostly benefit the corporations.

The result of the elections clearly show that sections of the middle class, organized into the increasingly powerful right-wing movement and backed by the capitalists, have gained more power in the society relative to other sectors. Among most people, however, there seems to be a desire for change—or things to get better—without having a clear right-wing expression.

2. Nevertheless, it seems that Reagan was elected, can't we expect more right-wing policies?

The answer to this question, like the first one, is also yes—if we simply look at the surface. Reagan will undoubtedly give a somewhat more right-wing tinge to government policies both here and abroad. But Reagan, like many presidents before him, has already moved—and will continue to do so—to the center, to more moderate policies.

For example, during the campaign, Reagan backed off his opposition to anti-social security policies and reversed his support for anti-union right-to-work laws. Since the elections, he has decided not to liquidate the Department of Education, a movestrongly advocated by the right wing. Reagan—and the capitalist class behind him—knows that to carry out a hardline right-wing program would be to provoke a fight back among workers and the oppressed that would make the recent Miami rebellion seem mild in comparison.

In addition, the right-wing policies that Reagan does carry out would be followed if Carter—or Anderson or Kennedy for that matter—had been elected. As we have indicated, the ruling class itself has shifted to the right, and whoever is the president—Democrat or Republican—will try to satisfy its own class goals, and those of the system as a whole.

Most important, people should keep in mind that what we do will play a big role in how far right the government and the ruling class move. Right now, the various social movements—from the labor movement to the Black, women's, gay, and etc., movements—are weak and on the defensive relative to the right-wing. Before the election, the pro-Democratic Party leaderships' manipulation of these movements put a brake on most organizing and struggles.

Jamaican Elections

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