



**Organize the working class for struggle!**

## To hell with the election circus of the four millionaires!

The presidential elections are upon us. And the only good thing that can be said for them is that Reagan is **not** running. But then he doesn't need to. After all, what choice are we offered? Vote for a millionaire or for another, richer millionaire.

We've had eight years of the policies of the millionaires, and they've brought nothing but hardship for the working people. To hell with this election farce! Let's organize to fight for the workers' needs! Let's organize the working class for struggle against all the millionaires!

### Where's the Fight Against Reaganism?

The specter of Reaganism haunts this year's election. Of course, the Democrat Dukakis grumbles about Reaganomics. And even George Bush tries to put a distance between himself and some of the more obvious outrages by the Reagan government. But then neither Dukakis nor Bush want much of a change. Just sweep the dirt under the rug. And maybe add a little sweetener to get the working people to swallow the bitter pill.

They both keep pledging allegiance to patriotism — but they won't say what that really means. Don't talk about U.S. imperialism's dirty wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. Don't speak of the continued aid to the contra war on the Nicaraguan revolution. Never mention the Iran-contra scandal. Just wave the flag as if there were no shame in the U.S. plunder and slaughter of working people in other countries.

They both also rave against drugs and crime — but they never mention Bush's involvement with Ollie North and the contra drug runners. No, it's only the old Reaganite solution of more police and jails, of a crackdown on the poor, on those who suffer the most from drugs and crime.

**"War on drugs" is a war on people's rights**

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**Gorbachev's reforms — Russian Reaganomics**

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**Kurds defy poison gas**

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Oh yes, Dukakis and Bush will, on occasion, ooze compassion for the poor and working people — but then neither has even pledged to restore the cuts Reagan made in unemployment benefits, or health care, or education, or the other social programs so needed by the masses.

And what of their professions of love for black people and other minorities — when Bush's top "ethnic" advisors turned out to be linked to the Nazis and other racists, and Dukakis is so fearful of losing the racist vote that he orders

Jesse Jackson to **not** campaign in Texas, Mississippi, Michigan, Illinois and other states. Could Reagan have done better?

### Just What the Capitalists Ordered

Of course this is not to say there are no differences between the two. Bush remains Reagan's man, a shamefaced campaigner for the filthy rich. And Dukakis still gives a nod to the workers and poor.

But can you really take it seriously

when Dukakis' running mate, the multi-millionaire Lloyd Bentsen, complains that "In the America of George Bush and Dan Quayle, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer?" Of course they do. But is Bentsen going to trade in his \$100 million to help out the working people? Fat chance.

Bush and Dukakis may argue over whether to spend a nickel or a dime on the poor. But they both agree to continue Reagan's billion dollar handouts to the rich and the Pentagon. The

*Continued on page 4*

## Support the Central American working people! Down with U.S. intervention!

The U.S. government is waging war on the workers and peasants in Central America. In Nicaragua, Congress and the White House are still taking revenge on the people for daring to overthrow the pro-U.S. Somoza dictatorship in 1979. Elsewhere in the region the Pentagon and the State Department are pouring in hundreds of millions of dollars to prop up pro-U.S. regimes against their own people. Three of these regimes, those of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, are particularly savage tyrannies. They are death-squad regimes where the military calls the tune behind thin "civilian" disguises and opponents "disappear" off the streets.

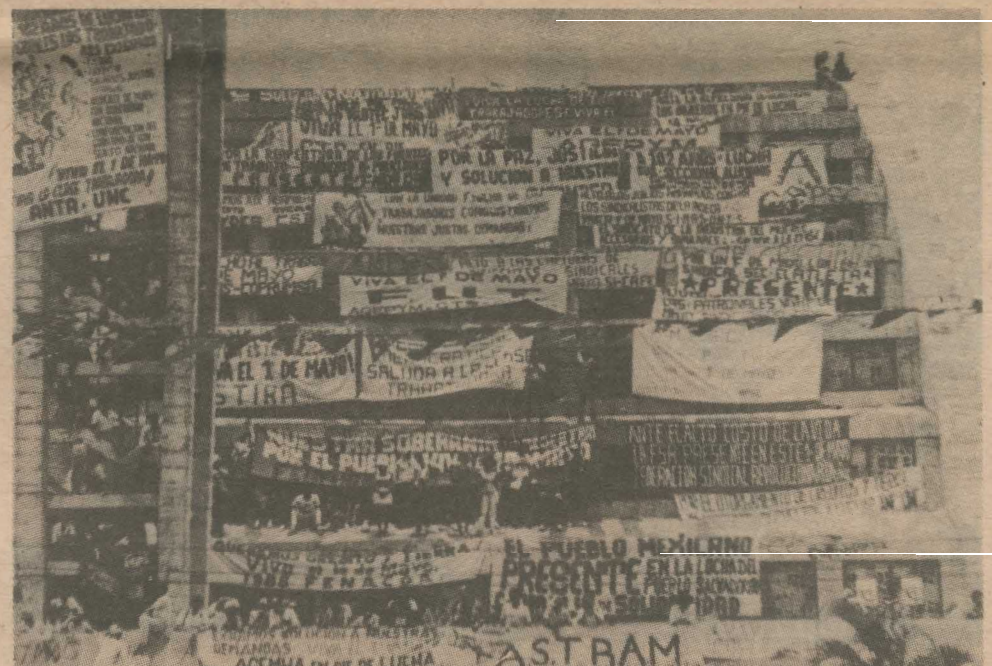
### El Salvador in Crisis

Yet the struggle of the workers and peasants against these pro-U.S. tyrannies continues.

The most intense development of the revolutionary struggle is in El Salvador. For years on end the insurgent people have defied the jackboots of the military, the torture of the death squads, and the air war over the liberated areas. Despite killer helicopters and U.S.-financed and organized repression, the armed insurgents, the left-wing unions, and the revolutionary movement in general survive and the struggles continue. And a new period of upsurge in the cities is underway.

Despite all its weapons, imperialism cannot suppress the struggle in Central America. Difficult as this struggle is, it continues and it inspires one with the need to build a movement here that will also persist in the face of all difficulties and hardships.

This struggle has had to confront many difficult political problems. Reformists in particular have tried to



Banners of the workers and other mass movements at this year's May Day protest in San Salvador.

call it off.

### The Collapse of Duarte's Reformist Solution

When Duarte and his Christian Democrats came to power, this was supposed to provide a peaceful alternative to revolution. But Duarte's rule has proved to be nothing but the "democratic" face for the right-wing murderers. During his rule, the military death squads have continued to butcher thousands upon thousands of dissenters. And the Salvadoran oligarchy, the dominant handful of big exploiters, was disappointed too, as Duarte failed to pacify the armed guerrillas and the toilers' mass struggles.

So now Duarte's Christian Democrats

are in disgrace. They have not solved El Salvador's problems, but they have lined their own pockets while the masses starved. They have lost credibility among both the masses and the oligarchy. The decay of the Christian Democrats means more people will turn to the left. It also means that the oligarchy is turning to ARENA, the party of Roberto "Blowtorch" D'Aubuisson, the death-squad maniac and torturer. Struggle isn't going to be replaced by calm and peaceful progress: large clashes are in the making.

### What of the Promises of the Arias Plan?

The jackboot of the Salvadoran *Continued on page 9*

## Republicans and Democrats, hands off Nicaragua!

For articles against U.S. intervention and on the Nicaraguan workers' movement, see pages 8-9.



# Strikes and workplace news

## Midwest rail strike halted: Democrats impose 700 job cuts

On September 9, over 2,600 workers of the Chicago and North Western railroad (C&NW) walked off the job. They struck against the company's plans to cut crew size from four to two men on most trains, eliminating about 1,200 brakemen's jobs. Before the day was over, however, the Democrats rushed strikebreaking legislation through Congress. And union leaders collaborated with them to put an end to the strike.

Back in August, the Democratic-controlled Congress stopped a C&NW strike after two hours with legislation imposing a 36-day "cooling off" period. But when the workers failed to "cool down," the Democrats decided to put a permanent halt to the strike.

On September 9, the liberal Illinois Democrat Paul Simon rushed to the aid of the capitalists with immediate back-to-work legislation. Based on a plan drawn up in April by a commission of the Reagan administration, Simon's bill cut crew size from four to three men, immediately eliminating 689 jobs. The fate of 500 other jobs will be decided later by an arbitrator.

The bill was quickly passed with the support of both the Republicans and Democrats. While the Republicans are known as champions of the capitalists

and strikebreakers against the workers, this vote shows that the Democratic Party is collaborating with the union bureaucracy to follow a similar Reaganite path.

Under rules of the House of Representatives, the quick consideration of the bill required a unanimous vote. If even a single Democrat voted against the bill it would not have passed. But none of the so-called "friends of labor" — not John Conyers, nor Ron Dellums, nor any other — voted against the bill. Initially Charles Hayes said no. But after a private meeting with the congressional sponsors of the bill and officials of the United Transportation Union (UTU), Hayes reversed himself and came out for the bill.

Apparently the UTU leaders — who had been posturing against the job cuts among the workers — sang a different tune when talking with the Democrats. The fact that they immediately ordered the workers back to work, and never even considered defying the strike-breaking legislation, indicates that their private chat with Hayes was not an effort to stop the Democrats' bill. No, they collaborated with the Democrats against the workers. □

walkout?

Growing safety problems afflict workers throughout the transit system in New York. Indeed, the September 3 issue of the "New York Workers' Voice," paper of the Marxist-Leninist Party, points out that the joint Transit Authority-Transit Workers Union Safety Committee is hazardous to the

workers' health. Unsafe working conditions must be addressed to the Safety Committee. Workers are not allowed to deal with unsafe conditions on the spot — no — they must wait a few weeks or months until the Committee acts! Rank-and-file job actions are what is needed to ensure safe working conditions. □

## Farm workers march for jobs, wages and against pesticides



At the end of August 400 farmworkers marched through Woodburn, Oregon chanting "Si, se puede!" ("It can be done"), "Justicia!" and "Viva PCUN!" This was the first public demonstration of the Northwest Tree Planters and Farm Workers United, a union organizing Oregon farm workers which is known by its Spanish initials, PCUN.

The farmworkers declared their support for the United Farm Workers (UFW) campaign against the use of deadly pesticides in the fields. They also decried overcrowded housing, lack of medical care, and pay cuts. For example, they pointed out that in the strawberry fields they are working for 50% less than what they were paid last year.

The next day, over 100 unemployed farm workers rallied in Yakima, Washington. For weeks, farm workers picketed state unemployment offices demanding immediate aid and the right to receive unemployment insurance. Last fall, tens of thousands of farm workers were stranded in Washington state without food, shelter, or gas. They slept under bridges, in cars and on the banks of the Yakima River. This spring thousands more were stranded without work. Similar cases have been reported

in California, Arizona, and the drought-hit Midwest.

Among those at the rally, were farm workers who had been fired for striking against Carson Orchards. Carson, like many other growers, had seized on the large unemployment to cut wages nearly in half. The resulting strike was broken when Carson got a court injunction against picketing and fired the strikers. It is reported that 14 other strikes have broken out in Washington fields in the last year.

In another development, San Francisco police brutally beat Dolores Huerta, a 58-year-old vice-president of the UFW. Huerta and other UFW organizers were distributing literature exposing the dangerous pesticides used in growing grapes at a demonstration against George Bush on September 14. About 1,000 people had come out to denounce Bush and his Reaganite program. When protesters jumped steel barriers, the police brutally attacked them with night sticks.

The police also attacked Huerta, who happened to be in the area. Huerta advocates pacifism and only the most timid reformism. But this did not save her from the police. She suffered two fractured ribs and a ruptured spleen. □

## 800 picketers at Grand Central Station



On September 9, Grand Central Station in New York City was brought to a halt by 800 picketers. The Metro North track workers walked off their jobs over safety issues. They were immediately joined by other workers on the commuter rail line who refused to cross the picket lines.

The picketers protested the suspension of 37 workers who, after working a solid eight hours hauling 600-pound

bridge timbers, had refused to work five overtime hours.

The picketing ended at 1:00 p.m. after a judge issued a restraining order barring picketing. Teamster leaders held a news conference and bragged about how much attention they had gotten. Imagine how much more "attention" the workers would have gotten if their union misleaders had left them alone and let them continue their

## Sweatshops on the rise

A report just issued by the General Accounting Office (GAO) in Washington, D.C., admits that the number of sweatshops in the U.S. has risen dramatically during the past ten years. The GAO is apparently talking about factories where workers are paid sub-minimum wages and work long hours in unsafe conditions. The GAO estimated that there are sweatshops in every one of the 48 continental states. As many as 4,500 sweatshops exist in New York City alone!

The sweatshops are largely in the restaurant and garment industries. They depend primarily on immigrant workers. The GAO reports that some workers earn only \$2 per hour and work 12 hours a day for six days a week.

It is no coincidence that the growth of these hell holes coincides with the era of Reaganism. Among other things, Reagan's budget cutting has slashed the number of health and safety inspectors. The few inspectors who are left have no time to search out sweatshops. And even if they did uncover a sweatshop, the GAO admits that virtually nothing is done against an employer who fails to pay minimum wage or overtime pay.

When Bush crows about economic growth in the Reagan years, he is putting a pretty face on the ugly growth of such things as sweatshops. Reaganism is a heaven for the capitalist money grubbers. For the workers Reaganism means pay slashing and overwork. □

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# Black masses rise against racist murders in Shreveport, LA



Police arrest protester in Shreveport.

Over 1,000 black people surged into the streets of Shreveport, Louisiana on September 20 in a protest against racist murders.

That night a 20-year-old black man was killed by a white woman in the Cedar Grove neighborhood. It is reported that she gunned down the innocent bystander in a rage after her drug deal with other men went sour. Earlier, in August, a black teenager had also been murdered by five whites outside a local restaurant. These and other racist incidents enraged the black people of Cedar Grove.

For five hours the black masses struck out with a vengeance against the police and racist businesses. They burned down a convenience store that had given refuge to the white gunman. They attacked a fire truck with bats and bricks. At one point, the windshield of the police chief's car was smashed and bullets passed through the back door.

The police cordoned off the area and arrested six black people. Meanwhile, the "respectable" black leaders quickly rallied to help local officials quiet the angry masses. Alphonse Jackson, a local black Democratic congressman, cried "we're sitting on a powder keg."

He appealed to the masses "to restore law and order" and promised them justice. But his only concrete proposal was to form a biracial "anti-crime com-

mittee." And it is well known that such "anti-crime" campaigns are most frequently used to attack the black people themselves. □

## Rally in Chicago park against KKK



About 250 people rallied against the Ku Klux Klan in Chicago's Marquette Park on August 28. Many people came from the neighborhood near the park, as well as from around the city.

The organizers of the march and rally tried to create a mood of "non-confrontation" and Martin Luther King-style "turning the other cheek." They even led off the march with hymn singing. But the marchers took up shouting slogans like: "No nazis, no KKK, no fascist USA!" "KKK, we say no, racist terror has got to go!" and "From South Africa to the USA, end racism right away!"

About 800 policemen wedged between the anti-racist protesters and a gathering of the Klan. Earlier, when a

celebration of Martin Luther King had been called for the park, the Klan called for a rally to "keep the neighborhood white." And, as usual, the liberal Chicago government gave them a permit to rally. Racists showed up from several states to join the Klan rally. But they were unable to intimidate the anti-racist protesters.

The Marxist-Leninist Party took an active part in the protest. The *Chicago Workers' Voice* called on people to join the march. It exposed how Reagan had helped revive the Klan and how the Democrats have played a dirty role in sabotaging the fight against the racists. Militants from the MLP carried anti-racist placards in the march and helped lead the shouting of militant slogans. □

## Palestinian struggle gets support in Philadelphia

The Palestinian uprising continues to pound away at the Israeli oppressors. Last month the Israelis introduced new plastic bullets as the latest way to brutalize the Palestinian people. But the brave Palestinians remain defiant. General strikes and street fighting continue to rock the West Bank and Gaza.

On September 16, a hundred people rallied outside the Israeli consulate in Philadelphia. They were there to denounce the oppression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli zionist

government. The protest was called on the sixth anniversary of the massacre of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut that had been carried out by right-wing Lebanese with Israeli backing.

Supporters of the MLP in Philadelphia took an active part in the demonstration. They led slogans such as: *Palestine yes, zionism no! Death to zionism blow by blow!; Victory to the Palestinian revolution!; and U.S. imperialism, get out of the Middle East!* □

### COLLAPSE Continued from page 4

it then went on and specified that the deficit with which it was concerned should be calculated by subtracting from the budget deficit the year's Social Security surplus.

#### Trade Deficit

The trade deficit continues. Wrangling about this deficit threatens a new round of trade wars. The result of such wars is to increase the instability of the world capitalist economy as a whole.

#### Environmental Crisis

Capitalism has produced a huge development of world production, but at heavy cost. A cost not only in human lives but also in the rape of the environment. And now some of these catastrophes are threatening to shake the economy.

There is the problem of shortages of water resources, compounded by a national scandal of contaminated water sources. Companies have found it cheaper to simply dump pollutants when no one was looking than to dispose of them. The result is widescale contamination.

There is the problem of the contamination of the atmosphere. The production of so-called CFC's, chlorofluorocarbons, has resulted in damaging the upper atmosphere. Already some measures are slowly being implemented by various countries, but there is fear that this is too little, too late.

These and other environmental problems require a planned response, sometimes on a global level. But capitalism lives on a devil-may-care race of each for himself. □

## Bush and Dukakis back Israeli jackboot

Every day there is one more atrocity after another being carried out by the Israeli government against the Palestinian uprising. One day it's a story about Israeli soldiers ordered to break bones, another day it's about a few more 10-year-old kids being killed. Each week the death toll of Palestinians mounts higher.

The U.S. government is involved also. It bankrolls the zionist regime to the tune of some \$3 billion each year. But the U.S. politicians don't even pretend that there should be any debate over support for Israel. Both George Bush and Michael Dukakis, both the Republicans and Democrats, are die-hard supporters of Israeli oppression.

That's no surprise. Bush and Dukakis are both imperialists and it's quite natural they support a brutal pro-U.S. regime like Israel.

But we the working people must oppose this shameful policy. We must support the Palestinian struggle for freedom. □

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# To hell with the election circus!

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Democrats and Republicans are both capitalist parties. They end up singing the same tune because that's just what the capitalist class ordered.

Sure Reaganomics is a teetering house of cards. Remember the Wall Street crash, the agricultural crisis, the bank failures, the plant shutdowns. But the capitalists want to shut their eyes to the impending catastrophe. Reaganism has, after all, also brought unprecedented profits. And the capitalists are addicted. They need another fix. They want four more years of Reaganism. So let Bush cover up the outrages and give us Reaganism with a heart. Let Dukakis take off the rough edges and give us more "competently managed" Reaganism. That's what the capitalists want, no matter how much suffering that means for the working masses.

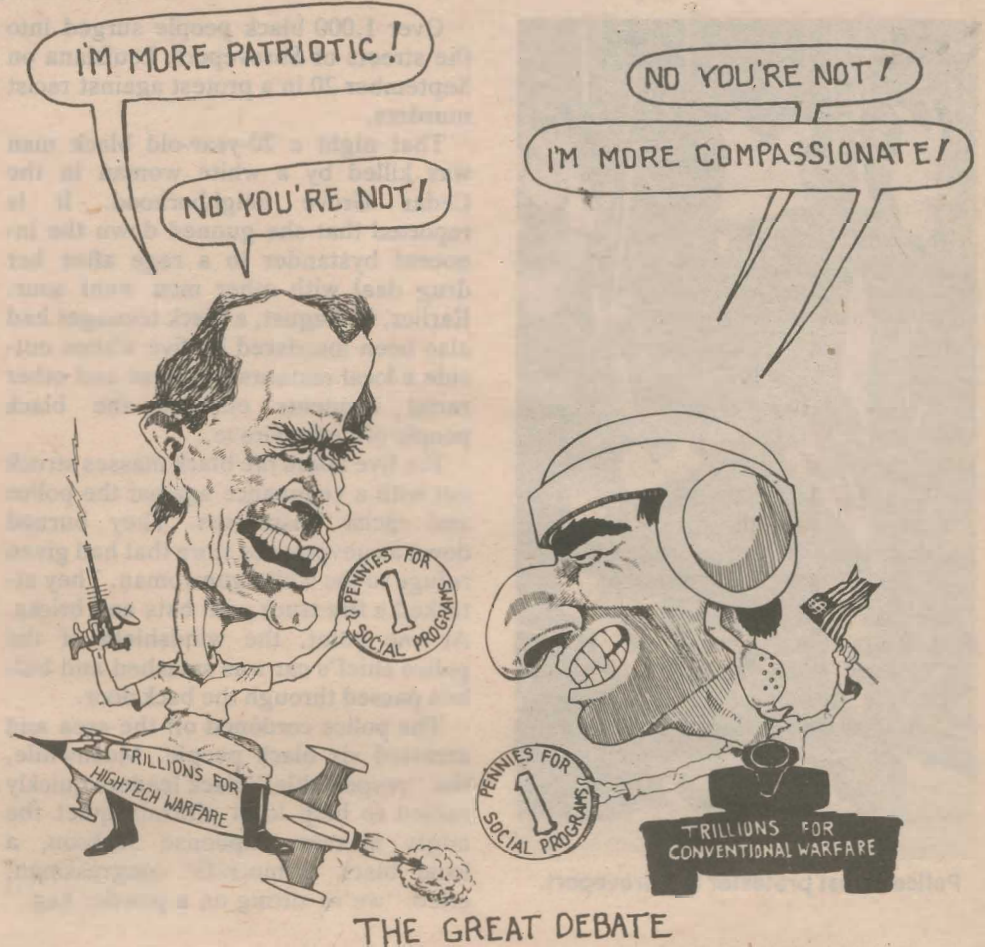
### Build The Independent Movement of the Working Class

Obviously, the November elections have nothing to offer the working masses, no matter who wins. But there is an alternative to the parties of the

rich. It is the path of workers' strikes and demonstrations against the capitalists, against their racism and police terror, against their system of imperialist domination and world conquest. The ice of Reaganomics will really start to melt only when the workers and poor in the U.S. rise with the same determination as have our brothers and sisters in South Africa, and Palestine, and Central America.

Such a struggle must be prepared today. By exposing that both the Democrats and the Republicans are the servants of the filthy rich. By resisting every attack of the capitalists, and using even the smallest skirmish to build working class organization. By uniting these struggles into a broad movement that says to hell with the capitalist parties, that aims to overthrow them.

The Marxist-Leninist Party is being built as the workers' party, a party dedicated to organizing the independent movement of the working class. Join with us in the factories, the communities, and the schools to say, "To Hell with the Election Circus of the Four Millionaires!" Join with us to organize the class struggle against the capitalists. □



# Behind economic recovery: A collapse waiting to happen

Since 1983, there is supposed to have been an economic recovery. And indeed, profits are up. The rich are richer. The corporations are playing a merry game of merger, a sort of corporate Dungeons and Dragons complete with "white knights" and "poison pills." The Reaganites boast complacently that this recovery will go on forever, provided there are a few more tax cuts for the rich. The Democrats say that they can do even better.

But underneath the glitter, the economy lurches from one danger to another. There was the threat of a major default on foreign loans bringing a crash of the banking system. Then there was the stock market crash of October 1987 that wiped out a trillion dollars in paper values in a few days. The capitalists held their breath. Would a major depression appear?

Afterwards, crossing their fingers behind their backs, the Reaganite economists crowed that it was never in doubt. The economy was strong.

But all this is bluster. The boom-bust cycle of capitalism is still in force. If it is true that the current economic recovery has lasted longer than most post-war recoveries, it is not some sort of miracle. Every recovery has its own particular features. And the present recovery is indeed a very special type of recovery. It is a prosperity where homelessness increases. Where beggars have reappeared in such numbers that the capitalist scrooges debate laws to curb them from appealing to passers-by. Where money for schools, child care programs, drug rehabilitation, health care, and other concerns is scarce.

If this is what is happening while profits are increasing, what will happen when the next crash comes? And come it will. For it is a law of capitalism that bust follows boom as night follows day.

Let us look at some of the conditions during the boom, and then at the rocks which threaten the seaworthiness of the economic ship of state. For capitalism is nothing if it isn't a system of permanent instability.

### Homelessness

Homelessness has become a national disgrace. Even some of the employed can't afford homes.

A report in September from the very cautious National Academy of Science holds that at least 100,000 children are homeless on any given night (not counting runaways or those kicked out of their home). It supported a previous study that estimated that 735,000 people overall are homeless on any given night, with 1.3 million to two million being homeless sometime in the year. Ten out of the 13 members of the panel making this report made an additional declaration saying the report was too calm. These panel members declared that "Contemporary American homelessness is an outrage, a national scandal...."

### Poverty Rates

Poverty rates remain higher than in the 1970's. This is despite the fact that there has been a major attempt to eliminate poverty from statistics by redefining it. Nevertheless, these figures show that one of every five children overall is in poverty. Two of every five Hispanic children are in poverty. Half of all black children live in poverty.

### Decline in Wages

Wages have been going down. Hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, have dropped 7% between 1979 and 1987. Millions of workers were forced to take new jobs at much lower wages. Others were forced into part-time or temporary work, getting less money and losing any benefits.

### Family Income

The Reaganite economists like to say that average family income is up. These are average figures, which mix together rich and poor families. Even so, this increase in family income is only because millions of more families have been forced to send an additional member into the work force. This is why family income is up while the hourly wages of family members is down.

Moreover, the average working family's economic position is not up. The economic statistics fail to take into account the costs of employment. When, say, two parents instead of one work, there are additional expenses for

child care, transportation, clothing, food, etc. Child care alone can cost thousands of dollars a year. If workers' family income were corrected not only for inflation, but for part of the expenses of employment, there can be little doubt that it has declined dramatically in the last decade. But the Reaganite economists count the entire second check as cream.

### Overwork

The last decade has seen an intense productivity drive. The overwork has reached immense proportions. Crippling medical problems such as tendonitis are spreading as inhuman speedup not only removes the charm of any job, but wears out the bones and nerves of the human beings involved.

Workers find themselves with less and less rights on the job. As a result, unsafe conditions are forced on workers, harassment increases, and the tyranny of the employers wears like a dead weight on the working class.

The employment situation in the country varies from city to city. But even in favored areas, the productivity drive is ravaging the working class.

Meanwhile the icebergs threatening the capitalist economy multiply:

### Business Failures and Bank Failures

The average number of business failures in the 1980's has been about double the previous high and nearly triple the post-World War II average. Meanwhile bank failures (including savings and loans) averaged 45 per year during the first half of the 1980's, compared with a post-war average of six per year. As the economic recovery proceeded, in 1985-87, bank failures have leaped to an average of 147 per year.

Bank failures have been so heavy that they threaten the federal funds insuring bank deposits. There are two such funds: the FDIC for banks proper and the FSLIC for savings and loan companies. Everyone now admits that the FSLIC will not be able to meet its obligations and will need a bailout. It was at one time suggested that the FSLIC could be saved by simply merging it with the FDIC, but all this would do is

bankrupt the FDIC. The only question left is how large a bailout the FSLIC will need next year, "only" \$20 billion or perhaps as high as \$100 billion.

### World Debt Crisis

Around the world, many countries are piling up huge debts. The "third world" is said to owe \$1.2 trillion in debts. It is another scandal what these countries got for this money and why they took these loans, but that's another story. Here the point is that debt has become a millstone around the neck of world financial stability.

If these countries default on this debt, it threatens the stability of the banks of the industrialized countries. But the interest alone on these debts amounts to a large part (in some cases, all) of the export earnings of the debtor countries. They are being squeezed to the wall to pay the interest. And this not only means taking this money out of the already desperate living conditions of the toilers, but destroying the local economies.

### The American Federal Deficit

The Reagan years have seen the federal deficit double. Another trillion dollars have been added. This has been a huge experiment in deficit spending. Interest payment is one of the biggest items in the federal budget. And the ongoing federal budget deficits are adding to this debt all the time.

While social programs are cut in the name of the deficit, there is no serious plan to deal with the deficit. The latest rosy predictions of a decline in coming years are just speculation. Moreover, they are based on utilizing Social Security funds to pay for the deficit. The politicians expect the Social Security funds to take in vastly more money than they pay out for a number of years. These funds are not to be put in reserve for future pensions, but poured into the federal budget.

The Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction bill did a fast shuffle on this. To reassure people that it wasn't going to touch Social Security, it stated that Social Security should not be considered part of the ordinary federal budget. But

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See COLLAPSE

## Bush and Dukakis make cheap promises Compassion by the penny

This election year has brought a flurry of promises to help out the working people. Eight years of Reaganism have been eight years of slashing wages and social benefits while costs soared for health care, child care, rents, and more. The masses are getting fed up. And so today even Reagan's candidate, George Bush, is promising various reforms to help the masses.

The catch is that neither the conservative Bush nor the liberal Dukakis want to spend any money on these reforms.

They would never consider making the profit-fat capitalists pay for reforms. Heavens no. The corporations and the rich made billions off of Reagan's tax breaks and other subsidies. But neither Dukakis nor Bush will propose they pay back those windfalls or increase their taxes. Many monopolies filled their vaults with the profits from Reagan's astronomical military spending. But neither Dukakis nor Bush will touch the huge Pentagon budget. Even the budget deficit brought profits to some of the rich, like the vast interest payments to the banks. But when Dukakis and Bush talk of keeping "the lid on the budget deficit" they never even think of penalizing the rich. Oh, no. Keeping down the budget deficit to them means solely holding down the costs on social programs for the masses.

Bush and Dukakis may chide each other over who is most concerned for the plight of the masses. But they stand together in maintaining the profits of the capitalists, in handing out billions to the rich. Meanwhile compassion for the masses is to be doled out by the penny.

So when Dukakis and Bush speak of helping out the working masses they don't talk about even restoring the cuts in social programs made during the Reagan years. No, it's only programs done on the cheap, programs that are "self-financing," programs that cost nothing because they are virtually meaningless.

### Reforms That Cost Nothing Because They Are Virtually Meaningless

Take the issue of jobs. There are, by minimized government figures, some eight million unemployed. Only a little over two million are receiving unemployment benefits. And plants continue to close, while the economy teeters on the brink of disaster.

But nothing is done except to pass a bill providing advanced notice for plant closings. And this was passed only after 85% of U.S. businesses were exempted. And only after the remaining corporations were given a giant loophole whereby they do not have to provide ad-

vanced notice if the job elimination is due to "business circumstances." It is little wonder that Reagan, for all of his shouting against the bill, let it pass into law without a veto.

Or take the Democrats' promise to mandate that employers give "unpaid" leave to workers to care for newborn infants and sick children. It's not bad

enough that most workers cannot afford a leave without pay. But the Democrats' bill actually exempts 95% of all employers. And Republicans, who now claim to support parental leave, want even bigger exemptions.

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See COMPASSION*

## Minimum wage hike killed again

Dukakis backs the Democrats' bill to raise the minimum wage. But this raise won't even make up for the decline in the purchasing power of the minimum wage during the Reagan years. It is now worth only 60% of the official poverty level for a family of four. Meanwhile, subminimum wage sweatshops are popping up everywhere. And the Democrats would help this trend. When the bill went before the Senate at the end of September, the liberal Ted Kennedy offered an amendment that would expand the number of students who would not be covered by the minimum wage standard.

This paltry bill was still too much for the Republicans. For eight years the Reaganites have campaigned in opposition to any minimum wage standard, much less raising the minimum wage. Recently George Bush changed his

mind and decided to support a rise in the minimum wage. Only not as much as the Democrats want; and with more exceptions, such as adding a so-called "training wage" to pay only 80% of minimum wage for the first 90 days of work. Thus the Republicans held a filibuster against the Democrats' bill.

What did the Democrats do? Unable to raise enough votes from even their own party, the Democratic Party leaders decided not to even call for a vote to break the filibuster. They simply threw up their hands and went home.

Such is the Democrats' fight against Reaganism. They don't fight to eliminate hunger. Rather they squabble with the Republicans over how hungry poor workers should be. And then cave in to the Reaganites at the first sign of difficulty. □

## To fight drug abuse, fight to change society:

# Politicians' 'war on drugs' is a war on working people

This election season the so-called "war on drugs" has taken a new turn. Now the user of drugs is the focus of attack. The new wisdom in Washington is that the best way to fight the smugglers and dealers is to cut demand. And that means cracking down on users.

There is one big problem. This war on the use of drugs turns out to be a war on the rights of all working and poor people.

Take drug testing. Reagan and Congress are putting out one plan after the next for mandatory and random drug testing. They want to test postal and federal employees. They want to pull government contracts from all companies that don't ensure a "drug free work place." Every worker is to live in terror that his or her urine won't pass the infamously unreliable drug labs.

This is not just an attack on workers' individual rights. It's a big stick in the hands of employers to fire militants and intimidate the workers.

Or take the new drug bill just passed by the House and moving through the Senate. Congress has given birth to a monster.

This law would sanction illegal police searches. It would set up another trap for the poor, barring people from public housing, and from school buses for the smallest infractions. It would impose \$10,000 civil fines without the necessity of having to be "proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt" in a criminal trial. And it would order long mandatory prison terms for people with small "user quantities" of cocaine. (See separate article on the drug law.)

### Liberal Democrats Pave the Way

The "war on drugs" fever has swept up all the capitalist politicians, from Jesse Jackson Democrats to Nancy Reagan Republicans.

The House drug bill was sponsored by Charles Rangel, a black representative from Manhattan, and was backed from the beginning by most Democratic liberals. Republicans then tacked on to the bill their pet police-state measures. They added the amendment permitting illegally seized evidence, as well as a

capital punishment clause, and other steps the House liberals objected to.

The Republican add-ons rankled Rangel. He declared that: "This war against drugs has become a war against the Constitution." But this "war against the Constitution" didn't rankle him too much. Rangel and most of the liberal

Democrats still voted for the bill, which passed 375 to 30.

Rangel and others may gripe that they would prefer a cleaner and more "constitutional" approach. But they got what was coming. When Jesse Jackson and the liberal Democrats joined the war cry to bring out the army and navy

and "get tough" on drugs, they helped to seed the wind. Now comes the whirlwind of attack on the rights of working and poor people.

But that's the logic of the capitalists' "war on drugs." That's the logic of the

*Continued on page 11  
See DRUGS*

## Congress's new drug bill: Allows illegal police searches, bars poor people from housing and schools

The politicians in Washington are tripping over themselves to prove who is the toughest and baddest fighter in the so-called "war on drugs." On September 22, the House upped the ante by approving a new drug law. The vote was overwhelming, 375 to 30. Now the push is on in the Senate to clear a similar bill.

Watch out! In the name of drug fighting, Congress is hatching a law that is repressive and reactionary down the line. The bill provides cosmetic doses of funding for drug education and drug treatment programs — programs that have been gutted under the "Just say no!" Reagan regime. But the meat of the bill is draconic new laws to strip people of their rights and pack more working and poor people off to prison.

### ● Illegally seized evidence:

The bill will allow illegally seized evidence to be used in federal drug cases. The only restriction on evidence would be that police had "good faith belief" they were acting lawfully.

There is also a move in the Senate to attach to the bill a retraction of the Miranda ruling against illegally coerced confessions.

Police trampling on peoples' rights — from illegal searches of homes and property to confessions beaten out of suspects — is apparently OK in the "war on drugs."

### ● \$10,000 civil penalties:

The bill would create a new system of

civil penalties for possessing even small "user" quantities of illegal drugs. Unlike the "due process" required in a criminal case, these civil penalties would be dishied out presumably like traffic tickets. But the fines will be astronomical, up to \$10,000 for possessing a single marijuana cigarette.

### ● Denying housing and education:

Civil fines would only be the first punishment for a drug user. Two drug violations over a ten-year period will also mean being barred from a series of federally funded programs. They would be kicked out of public housing, deprived of student loans and grants, and lose a number of veterans benefits.

The bill would also give federal grants to those states that take drivers licenses away from users.

In other words, if you are poor and caught with a marijuana cigarette you will be broke, homeless, and barred from higher education. And if you held a job you will no longer be able to drive to work.

Could a better recipe be devised for pushing young people into the drug underworld of crime and despair?

### ● Mandatory prison sentences:

On top of these civil penalties, people caught with "user" quantities of drugs can also be prosecuted on criminal charges.

Among other things, they will be subject to a new federal system of man-

datory prison sentences for anyone possessing cocaine based drugs. For example, possessing five grams of "crack" cocaine will carry a minimum sentence of five years in prison for a first offense.

The federal prisons are already filled to 60% overcapacity. Reportedly this is due entirely to stiffer sentences for drug offenses. These new mandatory sentences would bring about an explosion of the prison population, packing away untold thousands of victims of drugs and casual drug users.

### ● Death penalty:

The bill permits the death penalty for drug-related murders in federal cases. Presently, federal law allows the death penalty only for grave acts of espionage and for murder during an airplane hijacking.

It would be one thing if this were aimed at the real drug kings, including the likes of Oliver North and other U.S. top officials involved in running guns and cocaine to help the Contras rape and murder Nicaraguan villagers.

But the bigger the drug merchants, the less to fear from this bill. Because they have more money, more strings to high places, fancier lawyers, and better chances to keep off death row. Just as in the death-penalty states, at present, it will mainly be the poor and minority convicts who will face the federal executioners. □

# Socialism — the alternative to rule by the rich

What lies behind the escalating evils of the Reagan era? We see wealth and profits grow, while wages fall and society decays. We see knowledge increase, while schools decay and it is harder and harder to scrape up the money to go to college. International contact between countries grows closer, while "little" wars escalate and the factories fill up with orders for weapons of mass slaughter.

## Rule by the Rich — Cause of Mass Misery

These problems stem from the division of society into classes, one of which lives at the expense of the other. The capitalists and workers, owners of factories and seekers of work, the wealthy and the ordinary mass, this society is split into antagonistic parts. It is not just that the capitalists, the executives, the wealthy handful make ten or twenty or a hundred times more than what the ordinary working stiff makes. It is that the wealthy make their money off of the labor of the working mass. They live their lives of privilege with the things produced by others.

This is why everything in this society has a dual edge. The fall in wages causes despair among those scraping by for a living, but an increase in the price of stocks. Scientific advances create technological marvels, but end up throwing thousands out of work and depriving them of the most basic necessities. War is a catastrophe to the victims, but a source of profits to the arms merchants, and one of the main driving engines of the capitalist economy as a whole.

Nothing fundamental can be solved as long as society is split into the wealthy who rule and the poor who work. Today the politicians are again promising the sun and the moon if only the people elect them. The Republicans promise an eternal economic boom, and the Democrats are promising to be more compassionate than the Republicans, and both are promising to come down with the iron fist on anyone who disagrees, inside the country or out.

But decades and decades of empty promises have proved that the evils of society, unemployment and poverty and wars, cannot be solved while preserving the profits and rule of the rich. Congress passed full employment acts after World War II, but unemployment's still here. The leading capitalist powers solemnly renounced war a decade after World War I (Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928), but then came World War II.

As long as classes exist, as long as production is run to profit a handful, just so long will barbarism continue. Just so long will every advance in society also be a setback. Just so long will every increase in wealth be a new chain around the neck of those who have produced it with their own hands.

## Put an End to the Exploitation of Person by Person

The way out is socialism. It is the taking over by the working class of all the large-scale means of production and putting them to work in the interest of society as a whole, not of the profits of a handful. This is the beginning of the real rule of the vast majority, not just in casting a vote every so often but in actually directing the course of history.

This way out leads to the eventual achievement of the highest stage of socialism, to communism, which will bring the elimination of all class distinctions. There will be no division between the groups that rule and those that are ruled, between those who labor and those who direct labor.

## Large-Scale Production

Socialism is not just a question of some moral ideal winning over the hearts and minds of the masses. It is based on and prepared by the very progress of the economy, the very increases of technology, that have been created in the past by capitalism.

It is based on large-scale production. Huge factories, corporations, and enterprises now dominate the economy of all major countries. Work has become collective — and the large-scale

cooperation of thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of workers is needed to produce airplanes and dams and housing and every major product of the economy. This cooperation is not just inside individual factories, but between dozens and dozens of factories, means of transport, research institutes, etc. And this cooperation disciplines the working people, preparing them to wage a joint, collective struggle in their own interest.

Work has become collective, although the best fruits of this labor remain the property of a handful. This is the central issue of our time. Since work has become collective, shouldn't the products of this labor belong to all? Shouldn't the working people plan the economy centrally? Shouldn't the interest of the vast majority, which participates in this collective labor, determine what is produced and why?

## Make Knowledge the Property of the Masses

Socialism is also based on the increased productivity of labor. Enough can be produced to provide a good life for all. Not just sufficient food and housing, but education and culture as well. This means that it is possible for the workers themselves to have the expertise and knowledge to run society as a whole.

But as long as the exploiters rule, they will strive to keep the workers ignorant. The aristocrats of old forbade their slaves to learn to read. Today's capitalist aristocracy may need literacy and some technical knowledge from most of its workers, yet it still seeks to drug them with ignorance of life, religious sectarianism, chauvinist fervor, and all the outdated sludge of history. It lets the schools decay and converts mass culture into a cesspool.

In every mass revolution, the toilers have demanded literacy and enlightenment. This spread of knowledge is not only possible in socialism, it is necessary for socialism to exist. It requires such enlightenment on a wider scale than ever before.

## Class Struggle

Socialism is not simply based on the goodwill of right-thinking people. It is not something which can be bestowed as a gift to the toilers. It is based on the leadership provided by a definite class, the working class. Until class divisions are abolished, it is the working class which is the only consistently revolutionary class. It is this class which can rally the other oppressed and downtrodden masses around itself. The very existence of socialism requires that the working class display dedication, initiative, and united effort. It requires that the working class run the affairs of state and build up its own political party. It requires the working class prove that it has the drive to push forward production without the whip of hunger.

## Not Just Nationalized Industry

Socialism does not just mean nationalized industries. Many capitalist and revisionist countries have nationalized industries which are still run according to the interests of the wealthy. The capitalist parties still rule. The capitalist moneybags still live off the labor of others. And the capitalist executives still run these nationalized industries.

No, socialism requires that the working class itself become the ruling class. Socialism is not just nationalized industry, but also the working class organizing to carry out its will. It means a revolution in all spheres of society.

To achieve socialism, the working class must have faith in its own power and capability. It must separate from the Democratic Party liberals and the labor bureaucrats who would keep the working class enchained to redecorating the walls of the capitalist system. Let us use the elections to imbue the working class with socialism.

Down with the Democrats and Republicans, parties of the Reaganite offensive against the workers and the poor!

Organize for socialism — build the independent political movement of the working class! □

## CHILE

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claiming to stand for class struggle are excluded from running.

Pinochet clearly wants to get himself reaffirmed. But no matter what he would like, the October 5 vote may not turn out as just another routine rubber-stamping election that the Chilean regime is well known for. It appears that there are important sections within the Chilean bourgeoisie, the military itself, and in the U.S. bourgeoisie who would prefer that Pinochet lose. In fact, Pinochet's junta itself split on nominating him as the presidential candidate. The secret behind the Christian Democrats' euphoria is a deal with these forces.

Still, it is not possible to predict the outcome of the vote.

The rightist forces that have dominated Chile for the past 15 years may not go along with this game plan. They are already preparing for vote fraud to ensure a win for Pinochet. Or they may win by terror, by driving away voters from the polls in working class districts. Already, for the past few weeks, right-wing terrorists have been driving through working class districts of Santiago firing random shots at people to intimidate the masses.

It cannot also be ruled out that even if the "No" vote wins, Pinochet will scrap his prior plan. He may very well proclaim the "No" vote as proof that Chile is not ready for democracy and discard his own constitution.

But even if the best-case scenario turns out, there is no cause for the euphoria of an easy way out of

Pinochet's dictatorship. Even if Pinochet loses the vote, and the military proceeds with an election next year, this does not ensure the defeat of the right-wing tyranny in Chile.

In fact, only the struggle of the workers and people can determine to what extent reaction is set back and to what extent the people win their rights. And mass struggle and mobilization is precisely what the liberals do not want. They know that when the masses mobilize, they also raise their class demands against the exploiters.

The liberals are looking to anoint as the "victory of democracy" a civilian regime won through back-room deals with the military. But such a regime does not break the back of reaction, which remains in the background ready to pounce back on the people whenever the workers' struggle threatens the stability of bourgeois pro-imperialist rule.

Take a look at the just-passed new constitution of Brazil. Brazil was ruled by a military dictatorship since 1964. But after two decades, when it got into economic crisis and faced widespread popular upheaval, the generals returned the country's administration to civilians. Now parliament has passed a new constitution that is being lauded by liberals and reformists as a great victory of democracy. But aside from some phrases about full employment and other social reforms — which are just empty words — the constitution stipulates that the military must have at least six members in any cabinet, and it also provides the military's right to intervene any time it feels it necessary.

This is the kind of democracy the

Christian Democrats would get in Chile, if Pinochet loses and they can cut a deal with the generals. Such a "democracy" would maintain the fascist military apparatus which has been a regime of torture and murder for 15 years now. Such a "democracy" is in the interests of the liberal capitalists, but it is not what the workers need in order to have the best conditions for organizing their struggle against capitalist exploitation.

It may well be that time has run out

## COMPASSION Continued from page 5

### "Self-Financing" Reforms to Make the Masses Pay

Or take the "self-financing" reforms such as those to relieve the tuition burden for higher education.

Dukakis is ridiculing Bush's savings plan because it amounts to only \$20 to \$30 a year. But Dukakis' own plan

## MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

### ■ CHICAGO

1631 West 18th Street (one block east of 18th St. 'L' on Douglas line)  
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### ■ OAKLAND

3232 ML King Way (old Grove St.),  
Oakland, CA 94609  
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for Pinochet. But the workers have a big stake in how he goes. Will the pent-up mass hatred for his regime end up serving as the lever for a measly deal between the liberals and generals, or for a smashing blow against the military reaction? The second outcome is what would be best for the workers. That outcome requires determined revolutionary struggle. No matter which way the vote goes on October 5, this remains the task of the day for the working class. □

amounts only to spreading out over more years the huge debt a student has to pay back. Costs continue to go through the ceiling and the only hope offered young people is to put themselves in hock for the rest of their lives.

### Workfare for Squeezing the Poor

Or look at the welfare reform that is now being passed in Congress. This bill has a lot of bad measures. But it is sugarcoated with promises of providing job training and other assistance. Promises, but no funds.

Typical of the reforms on the cheap, the funding is kept down to a yearly average of just over half a billion for the next five years. So there's no funds to increase benefits, which have plummeted during the Reagan years. And there's little or no money to provide child care, or health care, or job training to help people get decent jobs. So what's left of this reform?

Well, there are measures to force people off of the meager benefits of wel-

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See COMPASSION

# Gorbachev's reforms—Russian Reaganomics

## Russian state capitalism in quicksand

In special meetings of the top Soviet leadership, Mikhail Gorbachev has just engineered some more changes in the Moscow officialdom. Gorbachev dropped a number of holdovers from the Brezhnev period and promoted his own supporters. He also took over the presidency himself.

Right away, Gorbachev received congratulatory messages from the Western governments. Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were two of the first.

Gorbachev claims that his reform program of *perestroika* and *glasnost* means the "renewal of socialism." But wait a minute. Is it possible that Reagan and Thatcher — who are notorious enemies of the working class and fierce anti-communists — would applaud someone who is seeking to bring new life to socialism? Do pigs fly?

No, the Western capitalists applaud Gorbachev because everyone knows he stands for introducing more capitalist reforms into the Soviet Union. But Gorbachev is not taking Russia from socialism to capitalism, as they say. Rather, he's trying to transform a crisis-ridden state-capitalist system into a system more like the Western capitalist countries.

Many decades ago the Soviet Union was indeed a socialist country. The working class came to power with the revolution of October 1917, led by Lenin and the Communist Party. But in the

mid-30's the Soviet leaders veered away from socialist principles and eventually restored capitalism by the 50's. Working class rule was cast aside in favor of the rule of privileged bureaucrats ruling with capitalist policies.

### Gorbachev's Latest Showmanship

The latest changes in the Soviet leadership were no doubt in the cards already, since the meetings which approved the changes were quick, formal affairs. But Gorbachev used showmanship to give the impression of a big shakeup. The meetings were called as extraordinary sessions, and Soviet officials on trips abroad even abruptly cut short their visits to return home.

Why all this hype? Because Gorbachev's reform program has yet to deliver the goods he has promised to the people. The Soviet people have been promised that Gorbachev's program of *perestroika* will mean an improvement in their lives. In particular, they've been promised an end to shortages in food and other consumer items, an end to shoddy quality goods, etc. But so far they've seen the situation only getting worse.

A few weeks ago when Gorbachev went to Siberia after his summer vacation, he was given an earful by the people. They complained bitterly of food shortages. There have been press

reports indicating that while shortages in food items exist everywhere, the situation is worse outside the major cities of the country.

Gorbachev hopes that the changes in the leadership will soothe the Soviet people and make them more patient. After all, he's dropped some of the officials the masses most associate with the disgraced Brezhnev regime.

### Capitalist Anarchy in the Economy

But while it is true that Brezhnev's regime brought Russian state capitalism to crisis, Gorbachev's prescription hasn't made things better. In fact, the present record suggests that Gorbachev's program has added new problems to a seriously sick economy. If things keep up this way, the economy may be heading for collapse.

Gorbachev is on a campaign to cut back on the central planning system and to operate the enterprises on a factory-by-factory basis. Each enterprise is to be "self-financing," set its own prices and wages, seek its own orders, etc. Seeking the fattest profit is to be the basis on which things are run. As well, Gorbachev has opened up room for private businesses which are called "cooperatives."

But as this new system is brought into place, major problems have loomed up.

Allowing enterprises to set their own

prices and widening the private sector have meant rising inflation. At the end of September, Soviet officials admitted this problem. For example, price rises include 20% for bread in the last two years, 15% for fruit and vegetables, and 10% for TV's, etc.

Recently the official newspaper *Pravda* reported a situation of near chaos in the economy.

It appears that the hunt for the biggest profit has led some enterprises to cut back on, or even refuse to fulfill altogether, government orders for goods where prices are deemed too low. Firms are supposed to make alternate arrangements to sell their goods but this isn't proceeding well; they are apparently seeking those deals which will give them higher prices. Production is switching to the manufacture of the more expensive products. Some firms are making major cutbacks in production, and making up the shortfall by simply increasing prices.

The end result has been production cutbacks, higher prices, and chaos in the economy. Now one wouldn't think that the problem in the Soviet economy is too much production. But that is apparently the answer the Soviet managers have come to.

The Gorbachev regime acts bewildered by these things, but they are the natural outcome of Gorbachev's plans to introduce more typically capitalist market ideas into the Russian economy. He believes in the wonder-working miracles of the capitalist market. The result is that each firm seeks the highest income, damn the needs of the economy as a whole.

### Squeezing the Working People

For the masses, it all translates into more shortages, higher prices, and a stepped-up productivity drive in the factories.

But this is only one direction from which the Soviet workers are threatened with higher prices. The threat of paying more also comes from Gorbachev's plans to cut back on subsidies to food, housing, transport and medical care. The Soviet leaders want to shift more and more of these onto the backs of the people. From their capitalist standpoint, these subsidies are "irrational."

And to top it all off, there is the threat of mass layoffs, as the enterprises move to "self-financing." The Soviet council of ministers has just called for a "plan of action" to liquidate loss-making enterprises. It has been estimated that the restructuring of the economy along "self-financing" lines will mean the loss of 10-15 million jobs in the coming years.

Clearly, it is not the working people who will benefit from all this "renewal." No, they will only get squeezed further.

But there will be those who benefit — the managers of enterprises will benefit as they "self-finance" their own pockets out of exploiting the workers, as will other high officials and some of the private businesses that will survive the cutthroat capitalist competition.

Stepped-up foreign investment and loans from abroad is also one of Gorbachev's goals. This means that besides the Soviet capitalists, the Western capitalists who are being encouraged to take a share of the exploitation of the Soviet workers will also benefit.

This is the real content of *perestroika*. Is there any wonder then why Gorbachev gets the enthusiastic support from the Western capitalists? After all, *perestroika* is not much different from what the likes of Reagan and Thatcher have introduced themselves. It is the Soviet equivalent of Reaganomics. □

## 1917 October Socialist Revolution in Russia—rich lessons for workers' struggle



The painting shows Lenin speaking to the workers at the Putilov metal works in Petrograd (what is now Leningrad) in May 1917.

Gorbachev and his bureaucrats in Russia today rule over a Soviet Union which has long destroyed socialism. They still call themselves communist, but they have nothing in common with the revolutionary communist party which guided the Russian workers in storming the heavens and overthrowing the capitalists in 1917.

The revisionists' betrayal does not change the fact that the 1917 October Socialist Revolution remains a source of rich lessons for all who wish to build the work-

ers movement into a force that can overthrow the power of the capitalists. The October revolution also teaches vital lessons in how to build a society run by the workers.

Lenin's writings are particularly valuable and should be studied by all class-conscious workers and revolutionary activists. The teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on socialism are very helpful in cutting through the distortions of the capitalists and revisionists and in arming ourselves to prepare our own socialist revolution. □

### COMPASSION Continued from previous page

fare. And there are measures to create a stratum of workers forced to work any job under any conditions on pain of losing their benefits. For example, the welfare bill includes a provision that says a person cannot refuse a job offer even if she would make less money at it than she presently receives from her piddling welfare benefits.

This is just the old welfare scheme.

It's another name for forced labor and cutting welfare benefits, in the name of helping people to stand on their own two feet.

### Organize Mass Struggle Against the Capitalists

The poor and working masses can't expect help from the likes of Dukakis and Bush. The Democrats, as well as the Republicans, are parties of the capitalists. Their talk of reforms for the

masses is no more than putting a pretty package on the Reaganite program of sacrificing the masses to the profits of the billionaires.

Working people have to defend themselves. And this requires organizing mass struggle against the capitalists and their political parties, against the Democrats and Republicans alike. □

# Who speaks for the Nicaraguan workers?

Last year the workers at the state-owned MACEN sack factory elected union officials associated with the Workers' Front, the militant trade union center associated with the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua. SACOS MACEN is a major plant, perhaps the main producer of its product in Central America.

The workers were previously represented by the Sandinista trade union center, the CST. They were dissatisfied, and elected more militant workers from the Workers' Front to head their local union. Since then, they have achieved a number of demands, including literacy classes at work and months paid maternity leave, and the end of some petty harassment from management. Faced with skyrocketing inflation, a wage increase is one of their more pressing demands.

What attitude did the Sandinista national leadership have to the increased initiative of the workers of MACEN? The Sandinista leaders speak in the name of revolution. Revolution means mobilizing the masses. So let's see what happened, according to the testimony of the *Militant*, mouthpiece of the ardent pro-Sandinistas of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the U.S.

## How the CST Regained Union Posts at MACEN

In the September 23 issue the *Militant* carries an article "Factory conflicts in Nicaragua spark debate on union democracy" which deals with the MACEN factory. It describes a campaign against the Workers' Front, "backed by CST regional and national staff members." In one incident of this campaign, the CST "physically chased" the five union officials and "11 other workers who they said supported the FO [Frente Obrero or Workers' Front]." They then demanded that these workers be fired, with the Ministry of Labor later endorsing the firing of the union officials.

Of course the CST had an election. But what an election! It was "chaired by an official of the Ministry of Labor" and packed with "regional and national CST leaders and a delegation of deputies from Nicaragua's National Assembly." The CST, according to the *Militant*, "led their supporters in boisterous chants" to shout down supporters of the Workers' Front. The hall had been specially prepared for the election too, with banners reading "The FO and contras are the same thing" and "FO out of MACEN." The CST refused a secret ballot and then harassed all those who started to raise their hands for the Workers' Front candidates.

Even according to the *Militant*, over 90 workers, disgusted by this Sandinista display, walked out of the meeting. Thereupon the CST continued the election with only a CST slate running. But running unopposed in an election by

show of hands, in front of Labor Ministry officials who had the power to fire dissenting workers, the CST still could not suppress opposition. Another 70 workers refused to vote for the CST candidates. Even according to the Sandinista figures, only 181 votes were cast for the CST candidates, barely 50% of the original 350 people at the meeting.

Bear in mind, this is from the account of the pro-Sandinistas. We still don't have the account from the Workers' Front or from *Prensa Proletaria*, paper of the MLP of Nicaragua. But even the Sandinista account makes it clear that the CST simply imposed itself upon the MACEN workers by force.

## Empty Words

Indeed even the pro-Sandinistas admit that "the FSLN and CST had not done consistent political work in the plant for years, and therefore had limited influence." Who needs political work when one can send in thugs ("turbas") to beat up the opposition? Who needs the initiative of the rank-and-file workers when one can have the Ministry of Labor fire the opposition? And look at the much talked about "ideological struggle" of the Sandinistas — all they can do is shout that the class conscious workers are "contras."

The Sandinistas accuse the Workers' Front of being contras. This is an example of the dirty slander and mud-throwing with which the CST confronts militant workers. The workers who fight the contras and lay down their lives, who produce and produce while fighting the pangs of hunger, who stand for continuing the revolution, are allegedly contras. But the bureaucrats in the Ministry of Labor, who send thugs to beat up workers while sending subsidies to pro-contra capitalists like Pellas, are supposedly anti-contra heroes. It is not the Workers' Front but the FSLN leaders who shake hands with Calero and sing the national anthem

alongside the contra leaders in Arias plan meetings.

The Sandinistas accused the Workers' Front union officials, who were veteran workers, of being "false workers." But the CST "regional and national officials," who ignored the MACEN workers for years by their own admission, are supposedly the true workers. The Labor Ministry officials and parliamentary deputies, who packed the election, are supposedly true workers.

But it is not just a question of ignoring the workers. The stand of the Sandinista regime is that the workers have no role but to produce. It gives subsidies to the rich while the workers bare the brunt of the hunger and deprivation. No wonder that the FSLN is losing influence among the workers and poor peasants.

The *Militant* said that the incidents at MACEN were just a mistake that the Sandinista national leadership themselves had criticized. But this was hardly the case of some inexperienced,

local activist making a mistake. And the workers remain fired, and the CST remains imposed upon the workers.

Nor was the affair at MACEN an exception. From the attempt to use convict labor during the Managua construction strike, to the mass firing of the striking automobile mechanics and other workers, this is the method of operation of the Sandinistas.

It's clear that the Sandinistas do not base themselves on the initiative of the workers. But revolution means that the masses put their stamp on society and decide everything, from affairs of state to the running of the economy, that the bourgeoisie used to run.

Is it any wonder that the militant Nicaraguan workers say that the Sandinistas follow a petty-bourgeois program? Is it any wonder that the revolutionary Nicaraguan workers say that they need a different party, the MLP of Nicaragua, if the revolution is to be carried forward? □



Construction workers discuss the experiences of their bitter strike at the Workers Front trade union center.

## What is the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua?

The right-wing parties denounce them, along with the Sandinistas, as communists. The Sandinista leaders sometimes call them contras. Who are the comrades of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (originally MAP-ML), and why does the assessment of this party vary so greatly?

The history of the MLPN goes back to the days of Somoza, when MAP-ML organized the workers for revolutionary struggle. The MILPAS forces organized by MAP were armed contingents of workers and youth who took part in the insurrection that toppled Somoza.

Today the MLPN stands for putting

the proletarian stamp on the situation. They call for continuing the revolution towards the power of the workers and poor peasants, towards socialism. They oppose the social pact with the pro-contra bourgeoisie which the Sandinistas are putting into practice. And they oppose the petty-bourgeois bureaucracy which the Sandinistas put over the toilers.

The right wing hates them because the MLPN stands for mobilizing the workers against the contras and against the local bourgeoisie and landlords. The right wing shouts hysterically about communism, and this time it really does have something to worry about, because the MLPN is truly a communist party. The MLPN stands for continuing the revolution beyond what the Sandinistas will accept, and it fights against the liberal bourgeois "mixed economy" that the Sandinistas advocate. The right wing distinguishes between them and the "opposition"; the American press, for example, repeats over and over again that there is only one opposition paper in Nicaragua, the pro-contra *La Prensa*. It usually doesn't regard MLPN's *Prensa Proletaria* as an "opposition" paper because *Prensa Proletaria* stands for the socialist revolution and denounces the counterrevolution.

The Sandinista chiefs often call them "counterrevolutionaries" and "contras" because MLPN stands for deepening the revolution, not the social pact with the bourgeoisie. The Sandinista chiefs want to keep the FSLN rank and file ignorant of proletarian politics, so

they resort to criminal lying about the revolutionary workers. Their disgraceful use of slander shows with how little seriousness the Sandinista leadership takes the opinions and organizations of the workers. But it is also backhanded recognition by the Sandinista leadership of the seriousness of the class struggle. The petty-bourgeois Sandinista chiefs regard the class struggle, pushed forward by the revolutionary workers, as a nightmare, a specter that is to be exercised by repression and mudslinging.

The class conscious workers, for their part, recognize MLPN as the party that speaks for them. It is the party that would give proletarian direction to the revolution. The party that defends the interests of the workers. The party, for example, that points out the workers must be able to eat if they are to produce, while the subsidies and luxuries given to the bourgeoisie actually retard production. It is the party that shows that the poor peasants must have land and implements if they are to grow food.

The Sandinista plan of "mixed economy," subsidies to the bourgeoisie, and deals with imperialism has led Nicaragua into the quagmire. It has been incapable of dealing with the harsh test of the contra war and the U.S. economic blockade. In this situation, it is only the socialist revolutionary path of the MLPN, the party of class struggle and consistent anti-imperialism, that offers a way out. □

## Support the Nicaraguan workers' press!

The Nicaraguan working people need our help against U.S. imperialist aggression. The MLP is organizing material aid through the Campaign for the Nicaraguan Workers' Press. In defiance of Reagan's blockade, the Campaign is sending much needed printing materials and supplies to assist the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (MAP/ML) and its Workers Front trade union center to build the workers' press. Send letters of support and contributions to:

Campaign for  
Nicaraguan Workers' Press  
P.O. Box 30272 Jefferson Stn.  
Chicago, IL 60630







# U.S. imperialism, get out of Central America!

## Republicans and Democrats, hands off Nicaragua!

The dirty war is far from over. Ever since the revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza regime in 1979, the American bourgeoisie has been taking revenge on the Nicaraguan people. There is now a slowdown in Reagan's contra war. But sporadic contra attacks continue. And U.S. aid still pours into contra coffers. Meanwhile, the CIA is financing the right wing inside Nicaragua.

### The Bipartisan Contra War

The Democrats have wrapped themselves in peace rhetoric, and they have a majority in both houses of Congress. Yet Congress passes one contra aid bill after another. In August the Senate authorized \$27 million in "humanitarian" aid and provided for a quick vote on an additional \$16 million in military supplies should Reagan request it. The House is expected to soon pass a similar bill.

### Another Contra Aid Bill — Where Was Dukakis?

Democratic Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis is no better. He started out posturing as opposed to the National Guard in Central America. But then he chose Senator Bentsen, a well-known cheerleader for the contras, as his running mate. No wonder the Dukakis campaign is pretty quiet about Nicaragua.

When the contra aid bill came up again in Congress during his Presidential campaign, Dukakis wasn't there. Instead of regarding this as the perfect occasion to denounce Reagan's war, the Dukakis campaign was embarrassed. The Congressional Democrats, finding yet another excuse to vote for more contra aid, did it this time to help the Dukakis campaign.

### Behind the Arias Plan

And it's not just Dukakis and

## Oliver North pursued by angry demonstrators

On August 24th, 300 demonstrators rallied in Waukesha, Wisconsin to con-

Bentsen. The CIA efforts at internal subversion have been greatly aided by the Arias plan, championed by the Democrats.

The Democrats say that the Arias plan is the answer to the contra war. But over one year of the Arias plan has not halted U.S. support for the contras. And with the U.S. still holding a gun to Nicaragua's head, the Arias plan demands that Nicaragua grant more and more rights to the pro-contra capitalists. Indeed, the whole point of the Arias plan is to force Nicaragua to grant to the right wing "peacefully" what the contras are seeking militarily. The Arias plan is a plan to bury the Nicaraguan revolution. The Democrats have stated this over and over again in their articles and speeches.

Recently the Democratic Speaker of the House, Jim Wright, stated that he "received clear testimony from CIA people" that they encouraged the pro-contra forces to carry out actions to deliberately "provoke" the Sandinista government. (*New York Times*, Sept. 21) But even as Wright spoke, his Democratic and Republican cronies in Congress continued to push forward plans for sending another one or two million dollars to the CIA-backed right wing in Nicaragua. Wright and his colleagues are not concerned with stopping the CIA's activities, but only in keeping it from upsetting the Arias plan negotiations.

### For a Mass Protest Movement

Workers and all anti-intervention activists! We must answer the crimes of "our" government against the Nicaraguan people with mass protests. We must direct our anger at the Reaganite warmongers, and we must direct it at Reagan's accomplices, the two-faced Democratic Party politicians. □

notorious organizer of the secret aid network for the contras, who wage the CIA's dirty war against Nicaragua. When demonstrators moved to confront North face to face, the police violently attacked the demonstrators, arresting ten and using a stun gun on one victim.

And in Chicago, 50 people denounced North when he showed up to speak at a Republican Party fund raiser.

Throughout his tour across the country, North has been unable to escape the wrath of the anti-intervention activists. □

## Congress sneaks more funds for Guatemalan dictatorship

More U.S. aid is about to flow into the pockets of the tyranny in Guatemala. The Cerezo government is a figurehead for military rule, and the death squads operate at will. But the Democratic-controlled House and Senate both quietly voted for the Reagan administration's aid request for Guatemala as part of the 1989 foreign aid bill.

The money for the Guatemala oppressors totals \$148.4 million including \$7 million in so-called "non-lethal" military assistance and \$400,000 for training

the brutal military and police forces. In fact the Senate passed a version of the bill which provides for \$2 million more military aid than Reagan requested. The minor differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill are all that's left to settle before the bill becomes final.

Once again we see that support for the death-squad regimes in Central America is a bipartisan policy of U.S. imperialism. □

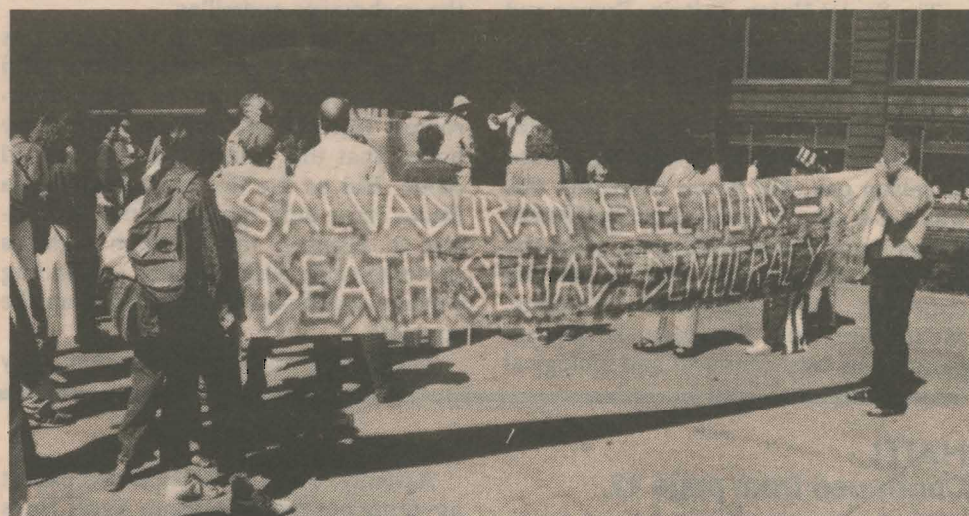
## Pentagon admits GI's in El Salvador combat

On September 15, the Pentagon for the first time admitted that U.S. military "advisors" have taken part in combat on behalf of the death-squad regime in El Salvador. On September 13, revolutionary guerrillas attacked the El Paraiso military base, killing 16 fascist troops. The Pentagon admits that three U.S. "advisors" engaged in the firefight.

According to official guidelines, the U.S. "advisors" are not even supposed to be in potential combat zones. Yet

only last year another U.S. "advisor" was killed in battle at the same military base.

The U.S. government pretends that the U.S. armed forces aren't fighting in El Salvador — why, they are only only supposed to be directing the U.S.-trained and financed government troops in their slaughter of the Salvadoran workers and peasants. But, as the battle at El Paraiso shows, this distinction is growing thinner by the moment. □



September 15 protest in Chicago against U.S.-backed tyranny in El Salvador.

## Down with U.S. intervention!

Continued from front page

tyranny would have been lifted long ago from the people's necks if it weren't for U.S. weapons, U.S. financing, and U.S. training. The Reaganites want more and more money to bleed the Central American people.

The Democratic Party pretends that it isn't so brutal as Reagan. It says that it wouldn't bleed El Salvador. It would heal everything with the Arias plan. The guerrillas should lay down their weapons and trust to some guarantees on a scrap of paper. Meanwhile the Democrats have voted hundreds of millions of dollars to prop up the savage Salvadoran oligarchy.

But one year of the Arias plan has not brought an end to the death squads. It has not brought democratization. It has brought only the prospect of ARENA ruling El Salvador.

### Which Path?

This has been a subject of disagreement inside the people's movements and organizations, such as the FMLN-FDR. Such FDR figures as Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora have been denigrating the prospects of the armed struggle of the FMLN and instead putting faith in the democratization of the ruling regime and the reasonableness of U.S. imperialism. They want the toilers to tone down their demands to what is acceptable to the Salvadoran bourgeoisie and to the Washington politicians. And Ungo and Zamora believe in the possibilities of open politics and power-sharing even with the death squads and the coming rule of ARENA. They hope to replace Duarte's Christian Democrats as the reformist center in El Salvador.

### Support the Revolutionary Workers and Peasants

We believe that there must be no support for these reformist illusions of Ungo and Zamora. Instead we must support the armed guerrilla fighters, the underground workers in the cities, and the left-wing trade unionists and activists.

Progress will not come with the kind permission of ARENA in El Salvador, or through building a new Duarte-style facade for the Salvadoran oligarchy. It will come only through the further growth of the toilers' struggle.

We must extend our militant solidarity to the workers and peasants of Central America. This requires building a movement to fight the U.S. intervention that props up the sick oligarchies of Central America. It means exposing the lies of the politicians in Washington. It means rallying the masses here in the U.S. in a movement to oppose the capitalist politicians and parties.

### Don't Let the Capitalist Parties Get Away With Their Aggression Against Central America

This is an election year. The Democrats and Republicans want to keep quiet about the situation in Central America, because the masses hate these new Viet Nam-style adventures while the bourgeoisie is firmly in support of them. Let us upset their sordid political game. Let us expose the murderers in Congress and the White House whose hands are stained red with the blood of the Central American toilers. It is not only the arms merchants who deserve condemnation, but the fiends in Congress who pay them, namely, the Democrats and Republicans.

Let us denounce the Reaganite warmongers! And let us denounce the crocodile tears of the Democratic Party politicians, who have funded slaughter in Central America with their majority in both houses of Congress! □

# Komala/CP of Iran: A working class force in the Kurdish resistance

## The Kurds defy poison gas and brutal regimes

With the cease-fire in its war with Iran, the Iraqi regime has unleashed all out war against the Kurdish nationality in Iraq's northern mountains. This has become a war of extermination against the non-Arab Kurdish population. Whole villages and towns are being pounded to dust. Civilians who fail to cooperate with the army against the Kurdish peshmargas (resistance fighters) are being massacred.

Adding horror to horror, the Iraqi army is escalating its use of chemical weapons. Phosgene, a deadly nerve gas, has reportedly now become its weapon of choice. Since August 25, Kurdish villages have become targets of almost daily bombardments from this poison gas.

This onslaught has driven over 100,000 Kurds across the border into Turkey. There they have been put in camps like prisoners, guarded tightly by Turkish troops. The Turkish government has good relations with the Iraqi dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. More than that, the Turkish regime brutalizes its own Kurdish population, which also suffers under a military jackboot.

Other Iraqi Kurds have fled over the Iranian border. However, the Khomeini regime is no friend of the Kurds either. It is waging its own war against its Kurdish population, and has put Iranian Kurdistan under military occupation.

### Sacrificed to Imperialist Interests

As always, the big world powers do nothing about the plight of the Kurds. To defend the Kurds might upset the imperialist appletart in the region.

The U.S. rulers are watching out for their own imperialist interests. Like the U.S.-Turkish military alliance. Like the prospect of renewed ties with the capitalist rulers in Iran. Like the vast oil deposits in northern Iraq.

The Soviet Union, Britain, France and other capitalist (and state capitalist) powers have similar imperialist interests in the region.

Last month the U.S. Senate voted for some token sanctions against Iraq's use of poison gas. But it was clear that this was not a vote in defense of the Kurds. It was more grandstanding to make the U.S. government look like an alleged opponent of chemical weapons. Meanwhile, the Pentagon keeps expanding its own chemical and biological



Iraqi Kurds cross over the frontier under the watchful eye of Turkish troops.

arsenals.

And the war against the Kurds goes on.

### The Kurdish Resistance

The Kurdish masses are in a hard place: locked in the vise of brutal capitalist regimes hellbent on crushing them. Sacrificed to the military and oil interests of the imperialist powers.

But the Kurdish people will be hard to break. For generations, their poor mountain regions have been strongholds of armed resistance to the chauvinist governments that trample on their rights.

Turkish divisions armed to the teeth and brutal laws banning the Kurdish language have failed to pacify the nearly ten million Kurds of southeast Turkey.

In Iran, troops have built forts at every Kurdish village and road crossing. But at night the villages belong to the peshmarga guerrillas.

In Iraq, the present use of poison gas is a sign of the desperation of the Iraqi regime to check the power of the deep-rooted Kurdish insurgency. The army hopes that the poison gas will spread panic. But so far the main peshmarga forces have held their ground. According to reports, the Kurdish fighters protected only with goggles, are finding ways to escape the gas and keep up the struggle.

The Kurds have proven that they

have the courage and the will to fight. At the same time their resistance movements remain hobbled by the political limits of their leadership. The Kurdish nationalist organizations have been dominated by the chieftains of clans and other exploiting elements out for their own selfish aims. And the leaderships have repeatedly fallen into the trap of expecting liberation to come from neighboring capitalist governments or foreign imperialist powers.

These evils have plagued the movement in Turkey, which is influenced by Soviet revisionism. In Iraq they have gripped Barzani's Democratic Party (KDP) as well as Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union (PUK). The same is true of the KDP in Iran.

### A Communist Force

But today a communist, working class force has emerged in the Kurdish resistance movements — Komala, the organization of the Communist Party of Iran in Iranian Kurdistan.

The peshmarga resistance in Iranian Kurdistan is the only serious armed challenge to the Khomeini dictatorship. The peshmarga forces belong to two political trends: the communist forces of Komala, and the bourgeois nationalist KDP.

The KDP is a tool of the landlords, merchants and other exploiters among the Kurds. Komala, on the other hand,

is anchored among the workers and toilers. Its organized strength lies among the workers in the brickyards, textile plants and other work centers, and among the farm laborers, shepherds and other working people.

The perspective of the KDP's struggle goes no further than autonomy in an agreement with the Iranian capitalists. Komala also demands autonomy. But it stresses that this demand will mean little for the Kurdish masses without a country-wide revolution of the workers and toilers. It places its struggle as part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed that will bring down the Islamic regime. That will overthrow the capitalists and landlords. And that will establish a workers' and toilers' government on the road to socialism.

The KDP looks to be rescued by the European capitalists or the Soviet revisionists. Meanwhile, Komala and the CPI fight against all the imperialist powers, whether U.S., Soviet or Western European. And they stretch out their hand of solidarity to the workers and revolutionary Marxist-Leninist communists of all lands.

We here in the U.S. should grip this hand and give Komala and the CPI every support. They stand on the frontlines of one of the world's most bitter conflicts. And the communist workers' movement in Iranian Kurdistan is showing the way out for the hard-pressed Kurds throughout the region. Because only the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed can put an end to the capitalist regimes that have unleashed troops and poison gas against the Kurdish masses. □

Last winter, a medical team of the MLP, USA visited the Komala-CPI camps along the mountains of the Iran-Iraq border. They came back with a great deal of information about Komala's struggle in Iranian Kurdistan: the armed struggle, the workers' underground, the liberation of women, etc.

A "Report from Kurdistan" was written by the members of the MLP team and serialized in the February through July 1988 issues of *The Workers' Advocate*. Please write for these back issues. □

### HAITI

#### Continued from page 12

Namphy and Romain. The officers of the presidential guard all sided with Namphy, but they were overpowered by the enlisted men led by sergeants.

But the soldiers didn't consider taking power themselves. They turned back to their old officers. General Prosper Avril, commander of the palace guard, was installed as the new president of Haiti. Namphy and Romain and a few of their close cronies were sent next door to the Dominican Republic.

Mutinies broke out in many army and police units, and the soldiers threw out scores of commanders who they saw as corrupt or too close to the old regime. They were not killed or punished, nor brought to trial, simply ousted.

Avril confirmed the ousters by discharging them but then replaced them with new appointees cut from the same cloth. For example, his newly appointed commander of the air corps was formerly Namphy's foreign minister.

### Liberals Hail the New Chief

Avril was immediately courted by the liberal politicians. The liberals are so elated about a president sitting down and talking with them that they are hailing Avril as a proponent of "democra-

cy" and "openness."

Actually, there is no reason to expect anything but the worst from Avril. He is a past master of palace intrigue and was Baby Doc Duvalier's closest financial confidant. He safeguarded the billions that Duvalier stole from the Haitian toilers and in the process made himself a millionaire.

Avril was also part of Namphy's original junta, formed when Duvalier fled. But he had been forced to resign when the masses demanded the ouster of all those closely associated with Duvalier. Namphy then made him head of the presidential guard, where Avril functioned as one of Namphy's most trusted senior officers. He has never been known to be a supporter of democracy. He consistently opposed the holding of elections and the return of Haitian exiles.

Avril told the liberals he has no plans for elections for at least two years. Yet they hail him. Why? Because they see rallying around Avril as the best way to prevent "anarchy." In fact the liberals became quite nervous as the army mutinies and strikes broke out in September. At first they liked the idea of the Macoutes' wings being clipped; but they were made nervous by breakdowns in the army chain of command and by the toilers getting armed and dangerous.

### Only Revolution Can Destroy The Reaction

For the moment the hard-core Duvalierists have suffered a setback. But there is no cause for complacency, much less for hailing Avril's regime. There has been no thorough purge of Duvalierists. What's more, the exploiters — the class which keeps alive the need for right-wing terrorists and military reaction — remain in power.

At this point there is not a high tide of struggle by the Haitian toilers. The masses will best serve their interests if they use the present weakness of power in Haiti to push ahead the making of a revolutionary storm. For there can be no democracy and freedom for the toilers in Haiti without uprooting all the bastions of reaction, Macoutes and military alike.

Right now Avril is plotting to consolidate his power and restore the prerogatives of the military officers. At the first opportunity he will crush the newly-gained strength of the soldiers.

And what of the soldiers? Their revolt has undoubtedly been a positive step in bringing down the Namphy regime. But these soldiers are politically inexperienced and have limited vision. They are willing to oust many of their commanders, but they remain loyal to a bourgeois military and to the power of the exploiters and rich. They overthrew

Namphy but they were naive enough to give power to Avril, who the Haitian masses know well as a Duvalierist too.

This shows the soldiers' gulf from the masses, which is their essential weakness. The soldiers will not be able to stand up alone against the consolidation of Avril's regime. If they united with the Haitian toilers they could contribute further to the forward march of the Haitian people. But they have remained aloof from the masses. They didn't call on the population for mass struggle. In fact, they remain loyal to the idea of support for bourgeois "order." Indeed they overthrew Namphy in large part because they saw his Macoute terror as the biggest threat to order.

Of course revolutionary activists in Haiti would do well to agitate among the rebellious soldiers at the present time. For if the soldiers combined their forces with the workers and poor, the reaction could really be challenged. But that would require the soldiers to join up with and become part of a movement of the toilers. □

# Update Burma: The people confront military crackdown

For months, the students and workers of Burma have filled the streets demanding an end to the military-dominated regime which has ruled since 1962. Eventually the army itself began to crack, as soldiers joined the protests in growing numbers.

But the Burmese generals were not about to tolerate the breakdown of the military. They have come out with yet another bloody rampage against the masses.

The people replied with daring resistance. For the moment, however, their fight has suffered a setback. But the regime has only succeeded in raising the stakes. Another round of struggle will surely come. Such a powerful popular upsurge cannot be easily quelled.

## The Movement Rises to a Crescendo

The anti-government protests had reached a high point the second week of September. A massive general strike had been going on for six weeks.

The movement had forced the old dictator Ne Win to resign, as well as his successor, Gen. Sein Lwin. A civilian frontman, Maung Maung, came next and he tried to cool things down with a mix of promises and threats. But to no avail.

Maung Maung ended martial law and promised multiparty elections. But the movement replied with the demand for the immediate resignation of the government. By mid-September, Rangoon, the capital, was rocked with daily demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of workers and students, as well

as doctors, nurses and other professionals.

The masses openly defied the bans on forming unions outside of government control. Students and workers formed unions. Neighborhood committees were organized to build barricades, organize demonstrations, and distribute food. A general strike committee covering all government employees was formed. This encompassed a huge number of toilers because in Burma's state capitalist economy, falsely called "Burmese socialism," nearly all workers are employed by the government.

On September 17, hundreds of thousands surrounded government buildings. Soldiers fired on protesters, but they were quickly overwhelmed. Day by day, the struggle became more intense. Government agents uncovered by the people faced quick popular justice. Protesters increasingly demanded action against troops who fired on people. It was the intervention of monks and liberals which held the masses back.

As the upsurge grew, the military and police apparatus became increasingly threatened with collapse. Six thousand soldiers and large numbers of police joined the demonstrations.

## The Velvet Glove Comes Off

At this point the generals stepped in and restored direct military rule. Maung Maung was cast aside and replaced with Gen. Saw Maung, head of the army and Defense Ministry. It is widely believed that General Ne Win, the old dictator since 1962, remains the real power behind the regime.

Demonstrations were banned and a

curfew was imposed. But the people poured into the streets. They attacked police stations and were able to seize some arms and ammunition. But for the most part they were armed with crude spears, arrows, and firebombs. They felled trees and built barricades. With these they heroically faced the army's automatic weapons, mortars, and recoilless rifles. Hundreds of people died in one-sided battles.

But the people weren't able to block the military assault. After a few days, the army appeared to have control. It says that it killed 250 people, but the real figure is many times higher. The people were able to kill at least 17 soldiers. The streets have been cleared, and the activist workers and students have been forced underground.

All is not calm though. The general strike is yet to be crushed. And there are reports of battles breaking out in the remote countryside which have been the scene of armed insurgencies for decades.

## The Peaceful Road Is a Mirage

The Burmese masses showed their fighting resolve when they flooded the streets to face the army crackdown. When hundreds die in such clashes with the heavily-armed military, it tells something of the fierce hatred the masses feel against the government. The army will find it hard, if not impossible, to subdue this defiant population.

What the Burmese students and workers displayed in their upsurge was remarkable, when one considers the decades of political stagnation under the Ne Win dictatorship. They learned to fight defying death. They successfully mobilized huge numbers into struggle. They learned how to organize street actions and barricades, how to build a general strike, and they even began to learn how to fight with weapons.

But in the end, this proved not to be enough to triumph. At the heart of this problem lies the lack of revolutionary working-class organization. This meant that there was no force which could mobilize the masses against the liberal politicians who emerged to seize influential positions in the opposition. The liberals, who are based on the well-to-do and have connections within the regime itself, oppose the tyranny but they created illusions of a smooth and peaceful road to democracy. They advised the people to be non-violent. Although the masses in many cases went beyond these liberal prescriptions, the liberals did succeed in undermining the battle-readiness of the movement.

The military crackdown has shown



Protesters in Rangoon shout "Hang Ne Win!", the former military dictator.

the bankruptcy of the liberal path. But liberal politicians continue to promote illusions of an easy road out of the tyranny. And so far the army has not attacked them, keeping open the possibility of deals with them.

For the masses, the rejection of the liberals is an essential condition for the advance of the Burmese struggle. The movement has to be developed into a revolution. Only when the movement is ready to confront the military and overwhelm it — both by force of its own and by winning over more of the ordinary soldiers — will the masses win the battle against military despotism. □

## DRUGS

### Continued from page 5

lock-them-all-up approach to a complex and widespread social problem.

### To Tackle Drug Abuse, Tackle the Social Conditions

The new focus to stomp down on drug users will not solve drug abuse.

It may cause a wave of arbitrary and discriminatory firings in the work places. It may cast a long shadow of police abuse and terror. It may force more young people out of the work force and out of the schools and deeper into the ghetto underworld. It may drive up the price of drugs (and the profits of the drug kings). And it may cause a further boom in prison construction to lock up tens of thousands of people who have no business being in jail.

But the drugs will still be out there. There will still be drug victims and addicts. There will still be dealers preying on the working class and poor communities. And that won't change without attacking the social conditions that give rise to the blight of drug abuse.

Only the blind could miss the connection between the rotting conditions of life and drug abuse. Factories are closing left and right and decent jobs are scarce. Minimum wage jobs can't pay the rent. Higher education climbs out of reach with the education cutbacks and soaring tuitions. For millions of poor young people there is simply no place to turn. Drugs are taken up as an escape. What's more, in the inner cities the drug rings have become one of the biggest employers of jobless teenagers.

Despair is also growing among workers on the job. There's the pressure of making ends meet with wage cuts and looming layoffs. There's the exhaustion from speedup and overtime. Some workers turn to drug or alcohol abuse in

hopes of easing the pain.

It is nonsense to talk of a "war on drugs" without a war on this ocean of hopelessness. These days, however, even the liberal politicians want to avoid this unavoidable connection. Better to show "toughness" and build more prisons. Better to fire workers and throw poor people out of housing and schools.

### The Working People Need to Change Society

This connection, however, must be at the center of a working class stand. The plague of drug abuse can be lifted. But what is needed is organization and struggle against poverty, unemployment, overwork and exploitation. What is needed is organized resistance to racism, police brutality and all forms of oppression that drag down the workers and young people.

Taking part in this struggle and organization will break down the illusions about escaping through drugs. It will break the grip of despair, providing new and revolutionary aims to fight for.

Above all there is the aim of socialism. This is the ideal of freeing society from ignorance and hopelessness by overthrowing all capitalist oppression and exploitation. Drug abuse will dry up as the working class reshapes society, as all are employed in useful and meaningful work to meet the needs of the working people.

As the first step towards this goal the working people need to build up their organization and struggle against the capitalists and their political stooges that are stomping on the workers and poor in the guise of a "war on drugs." □

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# The World in Struggle

Chilean liberals want a deal with the military, the masses want to smash fascism

## Pinochet under siege

October 1 has seen what is being reported as one of the largest demonstrations ever in Santiago, the capital of Chile. A million people turned out to oppose the fascist regime of Augusto Pinochet.

Pinochet has called for a vote on his continued rule to take place on October 5, and the government has allowed room for some political activity in the weeks preceding the vote. The Chilean people are using this opportunity to express their hatred for the regime.

On August 30, when Pinochet was officially nominated as the government's nominee in the vote, tens of thousands took to the streets to protest. In fights with riot police three were killed and 1,000 arrested. Since then, every week there have been demonstrations, drawing some of the largest turnouts in recent history.

Pinochet has ruled Chile since 1973 when, in a U.S.-backed coup, he overthrew the social-democratic government of Salvador Allende. He has called the current vote to legitimize his continued rule. If Pinochet gets a majority on October 5, he wins another eight-year term as president. If a majority vote "No," however, he is obligated under the constitution he wrote to call a multiparty presidential election next year.

### The Masses Reject Pinochet

The choices in the October 5 plebiscite aren't all that hot. Even a "No" vote means that you're agreeing to Pinochet carrying on for another year and endorsing his undemocratic constitution.

A section of opposition activists are boycotting the vote. However the large turnout at the recent demonstrations indicates that many people will go to the polls to vote "No" to Pinochet. Not be-

cause they support his idea of what a "No" vote means, but because they see the vote as a chance to register a loud protest against Pinochet.

A "No" vote can be useful as part of building the mass movement against the dictatorship, but the liberal and reformist forces in the Chilean opposition are using the October 5 vote to promote the mirage of a smooth and easy road to democracy, to promote the illusion that democracy can be won without revolutionary struggle and without striking deep blows against the institutions of the military tyranny.

The opposition campaigning for a "No" vote is dominated by the liberal Christian Democratic party. The Christian Democrats are no friends of the working people. They supported Pinochet's coup in 1973. They came to oppose Pinochet later, but only because these liberals represent that section of the Chilean capitalists who don't see a role now for an outright military regime and who would prefer the class rule of the capitalists as a whole. They see the vote as a way to have their cake and eat it too — to have Pinochet hand over power to them peacefully, without struggle and sacrifice, and without agitating the lower classes.

### What's Behind the Confidence of the Liberals?

The Christian Democrats claim that they have foolproof methods to prevent vote fraud by the Pinochet forces, and they are confident of actually winning the plebiscite. And they say that once Pinochet loses, they can negotiate with the military to have early elections under a liberalized set of election laws. As the law stands now, any parties

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Workers 300,000 strong protest the Pinochet dictatorship, May 1.



Street battle in Santiago.

## As Haitian soldiers oust Namphy, anger unleashed against Baby Doc's men

The people of Haiti are again settling accounts with the leftovers of the Duvalier dictatorship. They went into action after a soldiers' revolt toppled the regime of Gen. Henri Namphy on September 17.

When long-time dictator Baby Doc Duvalier was forced out in 1986, the masses tried hard to uproot the pillars of the old regime. But they didn't get far because Namphy and the Haitian military took power — helped by Reagan. Namphy restored more and more power to the hated Tonton Macoutes, the police force which was the backbone of Duvalierism.

The soldiers who toppled Namphy did not call the masses into struggle, but the toilers themselves went into action. They went hunting for the Tonton Macoutes. A dozen or more were killed, their homes ransacked and burned. The masses also tore apart the mansions belonging to Namphy, his mother, and the mayor of Port-au-Prince.

Workers went out on strike against government-appointed managers viewed as corrupt or tied to the old Duvalierist regime. Since the coup, intermittent strikes have shut down the postal service, the state-run power company, the



On September 11, Tonton Macoute thugs raided an opposition church and killed 13 people. Here the masses take revenge, setting a Tonton Macoute afire.

state-owned flour mill, the port authority, the telephone exchange, the main military hospital, and the immigration service. Students have also shut down the main university, demanding new administrators.

### Namphy Restored Macoutes' Power

The recent soldiers' revolt was in large part a protest against the resurgent terror of the Macoutes under Namphy's rule.

The latest outrage had occurred on September 11, when 100 armed Macoutes attacked a church where mass was being held by the Rev. Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was an early critic of the Duvalier government and he opposed Namphy as well. He is a maverick priest with a populist reputation.

People at the church service saved Aristide by hustling him out the back door. In standing up to the Macoutes' attack, 13 were killed and 77 wounded.

### The Soldiers Rebel

This attack outraged many people, especially when the Macoutes took over a TV station the next day to publicly brag about their "victory." Namphy did nothing against the Macoutes; he didn't even condemn their atrocity.

This was too much even for soldiers within Namphy's presidential guard. They began preparations to oust him. Hearing of the plot, Namphy called in the mayor of Port-au-Prince, Etanck Romain, to assist him. Romain was an important leader of the Macoutes. But the soldiers ended up arresting both

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