



Which way out of the economic crisis?

Only George Bush may have trouble admitting it, but the news about the economy remains grim. November brought a new spate of gloomy reports.

Behind the statistics of downturn are real-life stories of pain and suffering. For example, in Michigan, the death toll from Governor Engler's savage cutbacks keeps rising. A middle-aged woman dying because her medicine was cut off. Three men dying in Detroit from carbon monoxide poisoning as they tried to keep warm in an abandoned house.

Times in America are a changing. The present recession is one more of the typical boom-bust cycles of capitalism, but there is a difference. It is bringing to the surface deeper, structural problems

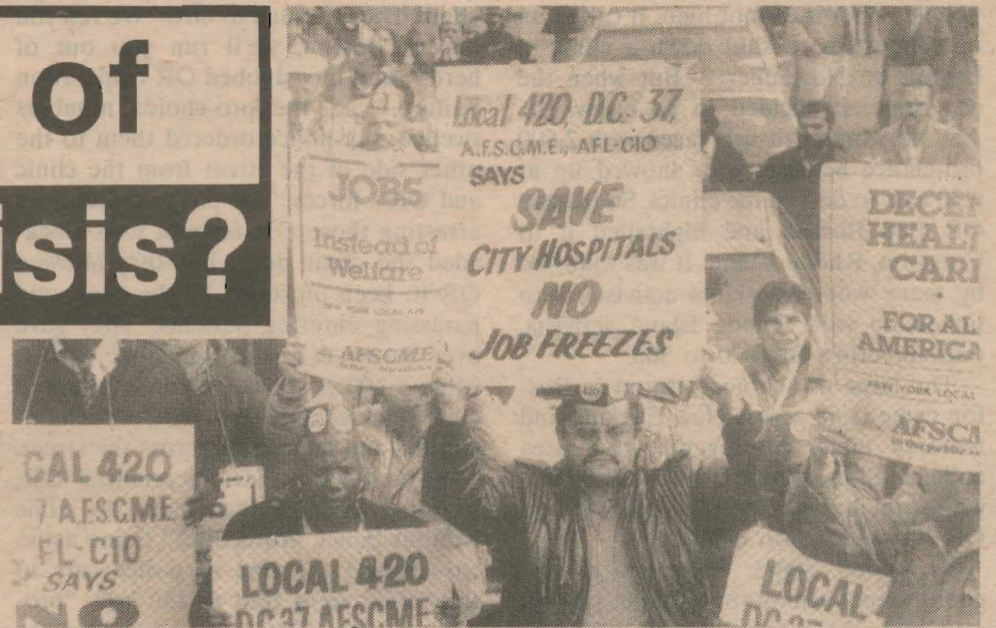
in the economy. This economic downturn is bringing home to millions of people that they are face to face with desperate times, no matter whether the experts call it recession today or they label it recovery next year.

The age of insecurity

Until recently, many workers in the U.S. hoped that the economy would continue to provide security and a reasonable standard of living. They thought they could afford to own homes, retire with pensions, and send their kids to college. But that security is being shattered.

Look at some examples.

■The march of job cuts keeps going



Workers protest budget cuts outside Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y.

on. Industries which already "restructured" in the 1980's like auto are to face even more downsizing in the coming years. More and more sections of the economy face similar restructuring in coming years. Companies which claimed to provide job security like IBM have

been slashing jobs in the tens of thousands. The Post Office which promised job security to all career workers under the last contract took it away from all with less than six years' seniority in the 1991 contract; and layoffs are being

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Royal Oak postal massacre The blood is on management's hands

On November 14 there was an angry explosion of gunfire at the post office in Royal Oak, a suburb of Detroit. Four people were killed and others seriously wounded by Tom McIlvane, a fired letter carrier, who then took his own life. This was a human tragedy. Workers are asking why this happened and could it have been prevented.

In this situation, post office management and the media are giving easy, stock answers to confuse the masses. They are telling us that the killer was simply a "crazed gunman," that we live in a "violent society," that there are "too many guns." But the roots of this tragedy lie elsewhere. They lie in the intense exploitation of postal workers and their persecution by management.

Management tried to ruin McIlvane

Regardless of what weaknesses Tom McIlvane may or may not have had, he was systematically pushed over the edge by the mad policies of his bosses.

McIlvane's fellow workers say that he was a good worker. But management wouldn't leave him alone. They found any excuse to hound and discipline Tom.

He was written up because the short pants of his uniform were supposedly too tight, because he gassed up his postal vehicle "too soon," because he drove 31 miles per hour in a 30 m.p.h. zone, etc. Two or three supervisors at a time sometimes tailed him while he walked his

route. When McIlvane objected to this persecution, he was written up for insubordination. Things snowballed and McIlvane was then fired. Tom appealed his case to an arbitrator and, after months of anguished waiting, learned he lost. The next day, his livelihood and dignity stripped from him, he went on a shooting spree.

Postal officials claim Tom brought it all on himself, for he had threatened a supervisor. But it was management that tortured Tom with petty harassment, write-ups and suspensions. And what about their threats against him — threats to take away his job and ruin him?

Is it any wonder that on the day of the shootings, McIlvane purposely went after management personnel? On that day he had the power of life and death over his supervisors. But until then, the power over McIlvane's life was in the hands of his supervisors. They made it plain to Tom they didn't give a damn if he lived or died.

Management slavedriving

The harassment of Tom McIlvane was part and parcel of the slavedriving policies of management. Across the country, the post office has a harsh productivity

drive weighing down on the workers. This has been especially intense in Royal Oak.

In spring 1990 a new management team was brought in from Indianapolis to crack the whip. This team of Presilla (Royal Oak postmaster) and Carlisle (the slain station manager) had acquired such a notorious reputation for employee abuse in Indianapolis that they were subject to a federal investigation by the Congressional Government Accounting Office (GAO). But the report just whitewashed them, ignoring things like Carlisle physically assaulting a worker. So their

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General strike sweeps S. Africa

South African industry was paralyzed by a two-day general strike November 4-5. It was the most successful general strike in the country's history. At least three and a half million workers stayed home from their jobs. Even the racists' South African Chamber of Commerce was forced to admit that the strike was 80-100% effective in the major industrial areas of the country.

The strike shut down enterprises throughout the major cities. In addition, it also enjoyed support from miners, farm workers, and residents of small towns. Some 40,000 mine workers stayed off the job, shutting down hundreds of mines.

The strike was called by a coalition of the major trade unions and anti-apartheid political organizations. It called for scrapping the new value-added tax, a national hidden sales tax that adds 10% to the cost of necessities like food, medical care, transport, and local government services. The burden of this tax falls disproportionately on the poor and working class people, who of course are largely the black masses.

The strike also demanded that the government cease its "unilateral restructuring of the economy."

The white racist government headed by President F.W. De Klerk, while talking about eventual transition to black majority political rule, is in the meantime setting up economic structures that will ensure the permanent economic dominance by the white racists.

Attempts to undermine the strike

The general strike was opposed by Inkatha, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's conservative black political organization. Inkatha publicly opposed the strike and in some areas offered to provide bosses with scab labor. This is no surprise, since even the government has now admitted that for years it secretly funded Inkatha.

The employers and authorities also attempted to use sectarian violence as a means to undermine the strike. At the President Steyn gold mine near Welkom in the Orange Free State, on November 4th, 19 men were killed in strike-related violence. And in the following week another 57 were killed. Finally, on November 11, the mine was closed by its owner, the Anglo American Corporation.

The violence began as friction between striking mine workers and those opposed to the strike led by management's "team leaders" (also called "boss boys" and known to the workers as *izimpimpi* — informers). Management uses ethnic differences between the workers to drive wedges between them, promoting "boss boys" heavily from one ethnic group, and using them as whips against workers from other ethnic groups.

Then, when the violence broke out, the media revived all their old stories of "black on black violence" and "tribalism" to promote that blacks are inherently violent and cannot rule themselves. This is the same sort of lie that the media have been telling about Inkatha-instigated sectarian violence for years, although in this case it wasn't Inkatha but other forces doing the dirty work. The truth is that behind most of the sectarian violence stands the hidden hand of the racist system and their instruments.

Constitutional talks begin in December

In late December, talks are to begin

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Inner-city schools in crisis

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Struggles of the homeless

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Defend women's rights!

Operation Rescue: It can run but it can't hide

Operation Rescue can run from the people — but it cannot hide. It called on its supporters to shut down a clinic in Boston on November 2. But when the day came, it decided to go elsewhere. And no wonder. It was faced with 2,500 pro-choice activists who showed up at 6:30 a.m. to defend the clinics. So instead OR fled Boston and high-tailed it to Cranston, Rhode Island. It was followed by many women's rights activists, who linked up with Rhode Island activists, outnumbering OR 800 to 300.

The large pro-choice turnout in Boston came from across New England and featured many contingents from area colleges. Some went on to Rhode Island, while others remained behind just in case OR hit any Boston clinics.

In Rhode Island, OR's anti-women goons descended on the Women's Medical Center in Cranston. About 100 of the anti-abortion crusaders blocked the front door, some chained together, while the rest picketed in front of the building.

But the pro-choice demonstrators

quickly filled the street in front of the clinic. They shouted to OR: "We ran you out of Boston, we'll run you out of here!", and they dubbed OR "Operation Failure." As the pro-choice numbers swelled, the police ordered them to the other side of the street from the clinic and OR's forces. The police did end up arresting those OR fanatics who blockaded the clinic door, but they allowed OR to keep picketing by the clinic and harassing entering patients. They gave over the street next to the clinic to OR, while a 100-yard line of police cars and cops shielded OR from counterdemonstrators and kept them across the street.

Pro-choice activists denounced OR, shouting "You couldn't block the clinic without police protection!" Some activists crossed the line of police cars to raise their signs next to the holy "pro-life" bullies. The cops responded by threatening to arrest these pro-choice activists. Meanwhile some NOW leaders advised the outraged pro-choice activists to go along with the cops.



800 abortion rights activists defend clinic in Cranston, Rhode Island

The huge pro-choice turnout showed that people were determined not to tolerate any more Wichitas, where OR ran amuck. The Wichita events, the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings,

and other outrages have resulted in many new people seeing the need to come out on the streets in defense of women's rights.

Phony abortion clinic picketed in Detroit

Over 50 pro-choice activists gathered at the Summit Clinic in Detroit early on the morning of November 23. They awaited word on where an expected anti-abortion raid would take place.

But it never did. Evidently the "pro-life" forces had remembered the confrontation with area activists the previous month which cleared them out from clinic doors in short order. So they

decided to attack a clinic in Saginaw, 100 miles away.

Seeing that OR had fled Detroit, 25 of the clinic defenders went to the Detroit suburb of Southfield to picket a phony pregnancy counseling service which actually dispenses only pro-life propaganda. Many passing motorists signaled their support for the pro-choice banners and signs.

Your children will be grown before you get family leave

The more Bush and Congress compete over "family values," the less they do for working class families. Take the question of taking leave from work for having children or taking care of serious family illnesses or other emergencies.

Bush calls for "voluntary" leave policies, which means that companies will not be required to give any leave at all

Companies will have the voluntary right to fire any worker who takes leave. In line with this, Bush vetoed even the feeble parental leave bill passed by Congress in 1990.

And Congress? They would at most grant unpaid leave to the workers who would afford it, and even then only to a fraction of the workforce. The House and

Senate just passed separate bills that water down even further the family leave bill of 1990. But the House, voting on November 13, couldn't get a two-thirds majority needed to overcome the threatened Bush veto. So it is likely that the bill that comes out of the House-Senate conference committee will be a dead letter.

Meanwhile working class families suffer. Without provisions for family leave, a woman who gets pregnant may lose her job. Any worker faces disaster when they have to take time off to deal with family emergencies. Furthermore, without not just leave, but paid leave, millions of workers will not be able to

afford leave and will have to risk their health or that of their loved ones.

The current bill in Congress only requires companies to offer unpaid leave. It specifies 12 weeks of unpaid leave for certain emergencies. And even for that, there are so many exemptions that only about one in four workers qualifies for coverage. You are out of luck if your workplace has less than 51 people (95% of all workplaces), if you are in the highest 10% of your employer's pay scale, or if you don't get at least 25 hours of work per week as a part-time employee.

And even this bill looks dead in the water.

Women's liberation and socialist revolution

Twenty years ago, a powerful mass movement rose up against the oppression of women.

Today the gains made by that movement are being taken away. It seems like we have to fight these battles all over again. Is this the fate of humanity, to fight and win until reaction triumphs once again, then to repeat the cycle forever? NO! We must fight once more for abortion rights, for women's rights, but this struggle need not be an endless cycle.

Revolution can end the cycle and effect permanent change. For permanent change we must have a new system, one that is based on the needs and struggles of the oppressed, one that clears away all the dead wood, inequality and bigotry of capitalist society. To change the system, we must build not only a militant movement for women's liberation, but a revolutionary movement that can one day seize power, break the economic power of the rich ruling class, and build this new system, socialism.

Capitalists benefit from the exploitation of cheap female labor. They benefit from the split in the working class that the oppression of women brings. Furthermore, since women shoulder the greatest part of the burdens that capitalism places on the family, it is difficult for women to participate in the movement. This is why capitalists will not liberate women, and this is why the gains of one generation's struggle can be lost so easily.

The reforms that were won twenty

years ago were the product of a powerful mass struggle. The rights and benefits fought for were just and are the type of demands that would be implemented by a revolutionary government if the working class of the U.S. came to power. Let's look a little at the history of a great revolution, the early days of the socialist revolution in the Soviet Union.

The working class of Russia showed, in October 1917, that it is possible to develop a revolutionary struggle that throws the capitalists out of power. The day after the working class took power in Russia, the transition to socialism began. Women benefited immediately from the October Revolution. The workers' government eliminated all the degrading and humiliating laws oppressing women. It enacted full legal equality between men and women in marriage and divorce, child support and inheritance, voting and holding public office. It legalized abortion. But the Bolsheviks of that time realized that legal equality was not enough.

The Soviet Union at that time was an extremely backward country. Patriarchal relations were the norm. Hundreds of thousands of women suffered under the veil. A fight was launched against all this. It was no easy task. For example, even as late as the first three months of 1923, approximately 300 organizers for women's rights were murdered in Central Asia in the countryside of the Soviet

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Chicago pro-choice movement defends the clinics

In Chicago, 600 people rallied for abortion rights at Federal Plaza on November 16, and then marched down State Street and Michigan Avenue to another rally at Seneca Park. Passers-by honked horns in support and grabbed literature.

And the next week, Chicago area activists defended clinics throughout the city from Operation Rescue and the Pro-life Action League on November 23. Groups of 10 to 30 pro-choice activists gathered early in the morning at eight clinics while another 300 gathered at a central location, ready to be sent wherever the anti-abortion forces struck.

The anti-abortion groups tried to shut down two clinics. At Diversey and Western, about 40 anti-abortion zealots tried to block the front door of the clinic, and another 140 were outside the front gate or sitting down in the clinic parking lot. But a few dozen pro-choice militants held the position between the front door and the OR sit-down blockaders, and others confronted OR in the parking lot. More and more activists arrived, swelling the pro-choice forces to over 200.

The pro-choice forces were militant, surrounding the OR forces, yelling at them, battling them. So the police moved in, arresting some of the OR blockaders, and ordering the clinic defenders to

leave, telling them that the police would take care of everything. The activists refused to go. This proved a wise decision, because, as soon as the cops started clearing the parking lot, other OR people rushed towards the front door again. The activists were on hand to stop them. The police would have continued taking their own sweet time dealing with OR, as is their usual practice, and this would have let OR close off the clinic for a period.

The police continued clearing away some of the OR zealots, but they also threatened to arrest the pro-choice forces for staying around in defense of the clinic. Only when the clinic director came out and supported their right to be there

did the cops back down. Meanwhile the pro-choice forces confronted the OR crowd outside the front gate, shoving them away from clinic fences and surrounding them.

The second clinic under siege was at 18th Street and Michigan. 200 pro-choicers rushed to help the two "spotters" already there. By the time they arrived, the clinic had been blockaded. With a battle cry of "we will open the door," some activists made their way through the police lines, and there were some scuffles with clinic blockaders. Up to then, the police had left OR untouched. But now the cops brought out their barricades and began arresting the OR crusaders.

The clinic defenders kept up the heat, chanting at OR: "You lost — hey, hey — you'd better go home and pray!" They sang satirical hymns, like Monty Python's "Every sperm is sacred," when the holy hypocrites began to pray. Several anti-choice signs were seized and torn up.

The establishment-oriented group NOW was not happy with the militance of the clinic defense. It stayed away from the two clinics where confrontation took place, although it had some escorts at other clinics. Meanwhile the level of confrontation was well up over the last major round of clinic defense in Chicago.

Congress fails to block anti-abortion gag rule

On November 19 Bush vetoed a budget bill that contained a provision that would have overturned the White House-imposed "gag rule" against abortion counseling at federally funded clinics. The House of Representatives then failed to override his veto, voting 276-156 in favor of the bill, which was 12 votes short of the needed two-thirds majority.

This summer, following a Supreme Court decision upholding the Reagan/Bush gag rule, many Democrats and even Republicans boasted that Congress would save women. They attached a provision reversing the gag rule to a bill funding the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The House voted 353-74 in favor of this bill, which was more than enough to override a veto. (Meanwhile the Senate added a parental notification feature to the bill: if all women weren't going to be denied medical rights, then at least young women would be.)

But politicians' promises last as long as snow on a stove, and so in November many Congresspeople reversed themselves. On November 6, Congress put the finishing touches on the spending bill, and the House voted on it again. But by now about 80 members of the House had done an about-face, and were voting against the bill, eliminating the two-thirds majority in its favor. So when

Bush vetoed the bill, the attempt to override the veto failed.

All the politicians needed to reverse themselves was the slightest excuse. Bush issued another "clarification" that the gag rule might not be interpreted as preventing doctors from hinting at abortion in life-and-death cases. According to Bush's doubletalk, just because his regulations prevented the clinics from telling the truth to patients didn't mean they were "gagging" the clinics.

Meanwhile some other congressional politicians had a sudden attack of conscience over a bookkeeping trick which has become routine in budget bills. In this bill, the trick meant pushing 2% of

the bill's cost into the next year's budget. But everyone knew that something else was at stake. Democratic Congressman Les AuCoin of Oregon put it as follows: "Some people have been under a lot of pressure from church groups and anti-choice groups" and the budget issue was "quickly used...as a reason for voting against the bill without having to say they were for the gag rule." (*New York Times*, Nov. 7)

Congress isn't really concerned about women's rights, and for all its rhetoric, it has more in common with Bush than differences. That's why it has not overturned a single one of Bush's 24 vetoes.

NYC protest against gay-bashers

Demonstrators marched outside a courthouse in Queens, New York October 28 to protest the murder of a gay Puerto Rican man. Inside, the trial was finally beginning for two skinhead gay-bashers who are charged with the murder of Julio Rivera. His death is the sixth known murder of a gay man in the Jackson Heights, Queens neighborhood in the last five years.

Activists held protests for four months before any arrest was made, even though the murderers bragged about their action.

The cops waited nine months before even classifying this as a hate crime.

The murder took place July 2, 1990. Three white men came from a party of their skinhead gang. Armed with a claw hammer, knife and wrench, they went looking for a gay man to beat up. They found Rivera in an area near some gay bars and beat him to death. One of the gay-bashers has pleaded guilty to first degree manslaughter and is expected to testify against the other two.



Chicago clinic defense, Nov. 23

WOMEN'S LIBERATION Continued from prev. page

Union.

The Bolsheviks realized that eliminating the worst features of patriarchy and the veil would not be enough. The entire economic and social structure had to be changed if women were to achieve real equality. Social conditions had to be changed so that women could in fact participate in the economy, the government and all aspects of social life without worrying about the consequences this might have on their families. Socialism could not be built if individual families had to bear the burdens of child care, maintenance of the household, care of the elderly, etc. The early Bolsheviks held that for women to have real equality with men, society must more and more take on these responsibilities. The Soviet society took initial steps to socialize these family tasks. It set up day-care centers and communal kitchens and laundries. There were experiments in model housing where they tried to find ways to socialize various domestic tasks.

History further shows that when the Soviet Union veered away from the goal of socialism, the liberation of women also suffered setbacks. A revisionist line was eventually taken by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. So then, when the CPSU and Stalin spoke in the name of Marxism-Leninism and the working class, they actually promoted the develop-

ment of a new wealthy strata and the development of a new capitalism. It was no accident that along with this, all work to radically transform society ground to a halt. Not only social emancipation, but legal equality was also taken away from women. Abortion was outlawed in 1935, family law was changed making it harder to get a divorce, "illegitimate" children no longer had the same rights as "legitimate" children, and other backward mea-

sures were taken. Meanwhile the Soviet Union became a capitalist society with a new state capitalist ruling class.

The experience of the fight for women's liberation in the Soviet Union, both its positive and negative lessons, shows that the emancipation of women is inseparably linked to socialist revolution. In today's fight, we must work for radical social transformation. Revolutionary struggle and the building of socialism

do not end the struggle for women's liberation, but requires that it be intensified and fully carried through, as real socialism requires the complete emancipation of women.

(Based on an article in the November 11 "Chicago Workers' Voice," paper of the MLP-Chicago.)

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Strikes and workplace news

Marchers denounce N. Carolina poultry plant fire

More than 500 people marched through Hamlet, North Carolina on October 18. They denounced the working conditions that caused 25 deaths in a fire at the Imperial Food Products poultry plant six weeks earlier. A huge sign at the head of the march listed the names and ages of those workers who had died. Most were women in their 20's and 30's who were trapped behind locked fire exits. The spirited crowd shouted over and over again, "Organize the South!"

The poultry industry employs 150,000 production workers throughout the South. Some 30,000 of them are in North Carolina. Most of these poultry workers labor without unions in conditions similar to Hamlet's Imperial Foods. As one worker put it, "I'm living in the days of slavery all over again. They just took me out of the field and put me in a building."

Clearly to defend their safety, to defend their lives, the workers must get organized. Unfortunately, the AFL-CIO bureaucrats are doing little to help. Instead of organizing the rank-and-file

workers to fight the capitalists and the government, whose negligence led to the tragic deaths, the bureaucrats preach cooperation with the bosses and begging the politicians for better laws. Little wonder that union membership has fallen to only four and half percent of the North Carolina work force.

Stricter safety laws will mean little unless the workers are organized. Indeed, individual workers at the Hamlet plant repeatedly complained about the unsafe conditions. But they were not listened to, and some were fired. Only organization on the shop floor gives the workers the strength to carry out job actions and make their voices heard. Only if the masses of workers organize can they force industry-wide standards that have some chance of protecting the workers in the worst hellholes, where it is hardest for workers to stand together.

The union hacks are doing little. The rank and file will have to get organized on their own. "No more Hamlets! Organize the South!" ■

Caterpillar workers strike

Two thousand members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) began a selective strike against Caterpillar, Inc. in Illinois on November 4. The strike action was centered at the Decatur and East Peoria plants where some of Caterpillar's newest and most profitable products are made. Caterpillar locked out another 6,000 workers at the Aurora and East Peoria plants.

The company is refusing to accept the pattern agreement reached with John Deere & Co. in October. It has insisted on a separate contract that would include concessions in many areas: a two-tier wage system; elimination or reduction of the cost-of-living allowance (COLA); no pay increase for the lowest-paid workers; and a lower wage package than that accepted by John Deere. Caterpillar is

also insisting that workers pay 1% of their average annual salary for health insurance.

Even though Caterpillar hauled in \$210 million in profits last year, they are crying that "foreign competition" is hurting them. The workers are not sympathetic. They point out that if Caterpillar is able to break with the pattern agreement, then competition will be intensified between workers at different companies. And, as well, there will be pressure to break the pattern agreements in the auto industry.

The workers are determined to win the strike. Unfortunately, the UAW leaders "selective" strike strategy is weakening the struggle by keeping some 9,000 Caterpillar workers on the job at other plants. ■

One-day strikes spread through Los Angeles County

On November 5, just before 41,000 Los Angeles County employees were to begin striking, union leaders called off the action. They declared they had reached a "conceptual agreement" with the County Board of Supervisors.

Momentum was building for a county-wide strike after a series of recent walk-outs.

4,000 nurses struck Los Angeles County

hospitals October 29. The L.A. County hospital system covers six major hospitals and 47 clinics. There are 1,000 nursing staff vacancies in the system. The understaffing has created enormous overtime and overwork for the nurses. A judge quickly issued a back-to-work order which limited the action to one day.

Meanwhile, other county workers began a series of one-day strikes. Actions



Nurses on strike against understaffing at L. A. county hospitals

were held by lab technicians, clerical, and custodial workers at the county hospitals. As well, truck drivers and workers in flood control, sewer and street repair, and county warehouses struck. On November 4, about 5,100 social service workers walked off their jobs. And the same day, 10,000 L.A. teachers rallied against a threat to cut their pay by \$1,800.

The leaders of the Service Employees International Union named their one-day strike strategy "Rolling Thunder." But when the workers pressured for a county-wide strike, the union heads balked.

SEIU general manager Gilbert Cedillo, called off the county workers' strike an hour and a half before the pickets were

supposed to go up. He claimed that a "conceptual agreement" was made over the phone with county officials, which would include fully paid health care coverage for county workers and their families. But he got nothing on paper. And the next day, county officials claimed they had only agreed to pay for health care coverage for county workers and not for their families.

The workers were outraged. On November 12, over 2,000 of them angrily rallied in front of the county board of supervisors building. They packed the supervisors' meeting and demanded speedy approval of their demands. Those workers who could not fit into the meeting hall, picketed and rallied outside. ■

Meat packers reject Hormel contract

Workers in eight Hormel meat packing plants defied their union leaders and voted 1,091 to 525 to reject a new concessions contract. The proposal demanded takebacks in medical coverage and offered raises of only 15 cents an hour for the first two years and 25 cents an hour the third year.

The present contract doesn't expire until September 1992. But the heads of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union agreed to open negotiations early and called for a yes vote on the proposal. Meanwhile, Hormel threatened that if the offer was not approved, it would impose the industry average of \$2

less per hour come September.

But the workers have had enough. They openly campaigned for a no vote to the proposal. One plant sign read, "We gave them more than an inch. Let's not give them the rest of the mile — vote no!"

In the last seven years, Hormel has set new records for profits. Last year, profits hit \$77 million. This year, on Hormel's 100th anniversary, the company's goal is \$100 million. Hormel is trying to increase its profits at the expense of the workers. But the workers are having no part of it. ■

Steel workers refuse to bow to closure threat

About 400 steel workers rallied in Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania on October 26 to celebrate signing an agreement with Cooper Power Systems.

The workers had been on strike since July 9. They were fighting company demands that they pay a higher premium for health coverage, give up their Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage for a self-insured plan, and allow a series of job combinations.

Union officials credited Governor Casey with settling the bitter strike. But workers at the rally assessed the situation differently. Many said it was their power, their "sticking together," that forced the company to back down. They had completely shut down the plant with their picket lines and repeatedly held rallies in Cannonsburg to build solidarity for the

strike. The workers stuck together and voted down a "final" offer in September, even after Cooper Power threatened to close the plant. Facing the workers' united determination, company and union officials were called to Governor Casey's office in Harrisburg where a new agreement was formulated.

The new agreement, which the workers passed, improved the wage offer, allowed them to keep their present health care coverage through April 1993, and barred job combinations without union approval. Unfortunately, the union officials are now talking about cooperation with the company. This could still lead to job combinations and the erosion of medical benefits if the rank and file is not vigilant. ■

Georgia textile workers win contract

After a four-year battle, 500 textile workers at S. Lichtenberg & Co. in Georgia won a new contract on October 16.

Lichtenberg, a curtain and drapery manufacturing firm, moved to Georgia several years ago from New York City in order to escape unionism. In 1988, the Georgia workers organized a union. But Lichtenberg refused to recognize it and began a campaign of firing pro-union workers. In all, 65 union workers were dismissed.

Working conditions at the plant were horrendous. The workers, primarily African-American women, were paid minimum wage with no benefits. They had no grievance procedure or sick leave.

And the company's medical plan was so expensive, most workers could not afford to use it.

As the confrontations sharpened, a judge thought it prudent to rule that the company was guilty of unfair labor practices and ordered that all fired workers be reinstated with backpay. The company then caved in to workers' demands for a contract. The new agreement provides for a 14.5% pay raise over three years, medical insurance fully paid by the company for all workers and their families, full sick benefits, and time off allowed for child care, family medical problems, and union leave.

One worker declared they had won the "battle for respect!" ■

Royal Oak postal massacre

The blood is on management's hands

Continued from front page

reign of terror continued in Royal Oak.

Letter carrier routes were made unbearably long, overtime became a way of life, and hiring all but ended. Talking in the office was treated like a capital offense. *The very morning of the massacre Carlisle sent home a carrier just for whistling!* Workers were goaded so they could be chopped down with disciplinary measures or outright firings.

Over these 20 months, Royal Oak workers petitioned higher-ups for relief, and postal clerks organized protest pickets. Things were so bad even Congress was forced to fake concern and a new investigation was set up. But the postal big shots turned a deaf ear. Meanwhile Congress simply allowed the post office to investigate itself. The hellhole

conditions that led to the tragedy persisted.

Mass struggle is needed

McIlvane's act of desperation has called attention to the issues. But it did not solve his problems. Nor can isolated acts of vengeance advance the workers' cause. For things to move forward from here, what is needed is united mass action.

Unfortunately, the postal union leaderships are not interested in mobilizing the rank and file for a serious fight against management. When someone like McIlvane is under siege by the bosses, coworkers are not rallied to their defense. The worker is left isolated and is confined to going through the grievance procedure. And this procedure is stacked against the worker who must suffer for a year or more awaiting a decision by an

arbitrator who is usually some high-paid professional who is predisposed to find in favor of management. Following this path, the worker can only stew and in some cases become so demoralized as to contemplate desperate measures.

After the massacre, William Burrus, executive VP of the American Postal Workers Union, admitted "there are a lot of problems with the grievance procedure." Of course he did not announce any serious campaign to change the procedure, much less call for actions outside this system to build worker solidarity. This was an ideal opportunity to demand the right to strike, but the union leaders failed to press this demand. And the union leaders won't contemplate organizing a struggle against the management productivity drive which burdens the workers and is the root cause of stepped-up harassment.

Rank and file, get organized!

If the union leaders have their way, nothing more will come out of the Royal Oak tragedy than another round of phony Congressional inquiries and maybe some temporary, cosmetic improvements. But the basic conditions that ruin the lives of workers will remain. Without struggle, any management approaches toward civility will eventually disappear beneath the pressure to balance the postal budget on the backs of the work force.

The tragedy in Royal Oak must be used to strengthen the resolve of all rank-and-file workers to organize a collective struggle against postal management's slavedriving and abuse.

(Reprinted from the November 18 "Detroit Workers' Voice," paper of the MLP-Detroit.) ■

Counseling session turns into confrontation with management

The events of November 14 left many Royal Oak letter carriers feeling shaken and very angry at management. This anger surfaced at the counseling center which had been set up in the Royal Oak public library the next day.

Nearly 100 postal workers were there as one high-level postal official after another tried to pin the blame for the shootings on Tom McIlvane and to sidestep the real issues that led up to it. John Horne, head of the post office's Detroit Division (which is over Royal Oak), and two other officials all lamented the tragedy and whined that they hadn't known anything was wrong.

The workers angrily confronted these big shots. One carrier exposed their lie that they knew nothing of the terrible working conditions. She recalled the protest letter signed by 65 carriers in September a year ago. The letter had been sent to Horne, and he did nothing but refer it back to the Presilla/Carlisle regime in Royal Oak, which then launched a campaign of intimidation against some carriers who had signed it. The lie of "we didn't know" was also exposed by the chief union steward, who pointed out the scores of grievances he had filed for carriers. And when John Horne stood in front of the workers, whimpering excuses, one carrier pointed straight at him and declared: "You are responsible for their deaths; their blood is on your hands."

The workers told Horne and the others that things had to change. They could not go back to work under the same conditions, with the same tyrannical supervisors. They raised the demand of adjusting the routes back to eight-hour assignments, instead of the overburdened monsters they have become.

When it was announced that Royal Oak postmaster Dan Presilla, the chief tyrant at the facility, was being removed from there, the workers cheered.

The solidarity of the postal workers at the meeting was shown in another way too. When the counselors proposed to break up the mass meeting into small groups, the workers vehemently objected. We are divided and split up all the time at work, they cried. We are prevented from talking to each other. We want to stay together and hear what each other has to say. We are a team. We work together. We will remain together.

Following the mass session, the carriers discussed their apprehension and concern about returning to work Saturday. Many agreed that the real problem

would be to have to face the same conditions and supervisors. If this was the case, many said, we will not work. We aren't going to take it any more.

With this anger and determination of the workers so clearly and firmly demonstrated, management made some changes on Saturday, the 16th, when carriers returned to work. Entirely different supervisors were in charge. Coffee and donuts were available on a table outside the office of Chris Carlisle, the dead supervisor who barely a year earlier had

forbidden any food or drink on the workroom floor. Letter carriers from many suburban stations came in to help the Royal Oak force move the backed-up mail. Their physical and moral support was a big boost to the Royal Oak workers.

But workers were horrified when they saw the hated supervisor Horton enter the building. One worker cornered and denounced him. Horton quickly fled.

The postal workers at Royal Oak have made great strides in pulling together

closely since November 14. They have made a big contribution to postal workers and other workers by strongly speaking out to the media, exposing the rotten conditions they faced and explaining that this was the cause of the shootings. They have hurt management by not letting them get away with their lie of blaming Tom while excusing management policies and practices.

(Excerpted from the November 18 "Detroit Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-Detroit.) ■

Royal Oak letter carriers denounce union chief Sombrotto

On November 20, nearly a week after the shootings at the Royal Oak Post Office, the national president of the carriers' union finally came around to talk to the workers. And what he had to say showed him up to be the sellout that he is.

When NALC president Vince Sombrotto appeared at the Royal Oak Post Office around 7:00 a.m., he started out talking to the assembled workers like a politician — about how he had once worked like us and how carriers always pull through disasters and get the mail out.

An angry mail carrier cut into this smooth talk, demanding to know why Sombrotto hadn't come to meet with the workers right after the shootings. He had, in fact, been right here in Detroit at the time, at the AFL-CIO convention. Sombrotto claimed that he couldn't get near the post office (a lie) and all he

could do was give blood. And then he tried to turn the problem back on the carrier — oh, you're just upset, blah, blah. This had the rotten smell of the same tactic management uses, to turn problems around and blame the workers instead of postal management.

As other workers chimed in to oppose him, more and more of Sombrotto's traitorous stand came out. Does the supervisor's harassment bother you, he asked? Oh well, just turn down your hearing aid; let it roll off your shoulders, he advised. But for sure don't argue with them or defend yourself, he told some carriers. If their abuse and hounding get you upset, that's YOUR problem for letting it bother you.

What horseshit! This attitude makes the question of dealing with the abominable working conditions solely an individual matter. In other words, each person must deal with it alone — and not

even by standing up to it, but by ignoring it. This is extremely difficult to do. Furthermore, a union is supposed to be an organization where workers can band together so as to wage a more powerful fight against management. Sombrotto has obviously totally abandoned this tradition.

And then Sombrotto expressed his total impotence. Management can do anything they want, he said. I can't stop them. If they want to put up signs on your cases that you must sort 10 feet of mail an hour, they can do it. I can't stop it.

No, he can't. Because Sombrotto has absolutely no intention of mobilizing the strength of the tens of thousands of mail carriers.

(Excerpted from the November 25 "Detroit Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-Detroit.) ■

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be remembered that this is the same Jack Kemp that has HUD evicting thousands of people from their homes for not being able to pay off mortgages; that has ordered the eviction of hundreds of people from public housing for nothing more than being "suspected" of selling drugs; that is selling off public housing projects in the name of "tenant management." Kemp is another servant of the capitalist takeback offensive just like President Bush and Governor Engler and Mayor Young.

To win relief the masses must continue

to organize mass struggle and build up their own independent movement. ■

Homeless people march in Chicago

Homeless people marched through Chicago's far west side on October 26. They demanded shelter and housing. This is now more urgent than ever because at least eight shelters and street centers have been closed due to cuts by the government and private agencies.

Earlier, on October 12, more than 100 African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Puerto Ricans marched in the "Homeless Action Walk-A-Thon" from the city's near west side Haymarket district to the loop. Their banner read

"Homelessness in Chicago, Our City's Disgrace — 50,000 plus." ■

Ohio demonstrators demand the restoration of GA

Protesters converged on the state capitol in Columbus, Ohio in October. They denounced Governor Voinovich and the state legislature for eliminating General Assistance. Some 123,000 people will be removed from the rolls as of April 1, 1992. The legislature also decided to restrict health care benefits for the poor. The protesters demanded that GA and health benefits be restored and that more funds be allocated for low-income housing. ■

'Savage Inequalities':

The truth about inner-city schools

The Bush administration says that the schools have all the money they need. If the inner-city schools are a mess, the wealthy rulers of this country sneer, it's the parents' fault, it's the students' fault, it's the teachers' fault: all they have to do is go to church and renew their moral values.

Supposedly the schools are swimming in money. The schools are supposed to have far more money than in the 60's. Lack of money, bad conditions, racial segregation, are all supposed to be sins of the past. Today the issue is supposed to be moral values, discipline, and competition among schools.

But take a look at the actual conditions in the inner-city schools. A far different picture emerges. Recently the veteran writer on education, Jonathan Kozol, made a tour of inner-city schools across America. He visited major cities, such as Chicago, New York, Detroit, Washington, D.C., and San Antonio. And he visited some of the poorest, dying cities, such as East St. Louis, Illinois and Camden, New Jersey, which have been turned into junkyards to house discarded minorities. And then he wrote his new book *Savage Inequalities, Children in America's Schools*.

A picture of devastation

For non-white and poor inner-city children, he found that the schools were rundown and devastated. To begin with, many lack the most basic resources. There were schools without sufficient classrooms, with students from different classes crowded together. The schools don't have enough textbooks for their students, and what they have is often old and outdated. There were classes that went without a steady teacher, and had one substitute after another, and sometimes no teacher at all.

And the physical condition of these schools was often beyond description.

Widespread segregation

Meanwhile racial segregation is prevalent throughout the country. The worst, most hellish conditions are afflicted on black, Hispanic and other minority students. Kozol states that "Most of the urban schools I visited were 95 to 99%

nonwhite. In no school that I saw anywhere in the United States were non-white children in large numbers truly intermingled with white children." (*Savage Inequalities*, page 3)

He points out that the school officials and the national reports on education generally take segregation for granted. They don't talk about inequality and segregation as evils, but assume that educational reform has to take place within the context of inequality and segregation. Kozol points out that this is true of most black principals and officials as well. He writes that "A new generation of black urban school officials has been groomed to settle for a better version of unequal segregated education." (p. 82)

In some cases, segregation is being proposed as the brilliant new idea of the year. He points out that separate schools or classes for black males have been proposed or considered in Detroit, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Washington, D.C., New York, and Philadelphia. (p. 3)

Spending disparities

"Separate but equal" has always been a lie. And the miserable conditions in the inner-city schools are a direct result of the lack of spending on these schools. All across the country, far more money is spent on educating the children of the rich than on working class and poor children. The national reports on education often compare spending levels in different states. But within the same state, the richest district may spend up to three times as much money per pupil as the poorest. The inner-city districts are starved for cash (although there may be even poorer, segregated small-town districts).

Furthermore, Kozol points out that if money was spent according to need, the inner-city schools should have more spent on them than the wealthy suburbs. For example, some inner-city children come to school hungry; there should be school breakfast and lunch programs to help them. And Kozol writes of the bad teeth he sees among the children. This isn't a minor cosmetic matter, but Kozol has seen school children in constant pain. And yet they are expected to sit quietly

and concentrate on their school work.

But it is the children of the rich who go to schools with more nurses, medical attention, counselors, and other support personnel.

Disparities even inside the districts

The racism in American education is not just seen in the low funding of inner-city districts. In some cities, such as New York, there are differences between how the schools are funded within a single school system. Kozol describes miserably overcrowded schools for blacks and Hispanics, one of which is a converted skating rink with pupils crowded into rooms lacking windows. And he compares them to a rather nice New York City school in a mostly well-off and white area.

The drill sergeant-style curriculum

How are inner-city students supposed to learn in such an environment? The new buzzword is more discipline, more rote memory, more standardized tests. And Bush has pushed for more of this with his insistence on national standardized tests to help determine which schools to reward and which to punish.

But Kozol points to the result of this type of teaching. For example, there are English classes where students no longer read books or poems or plays, but just do workbook exercises geared to standardized tests. Anything inspiring, anything of human interest, any training in how to think and criticize and develop broad ideas, has been drained from these

classes.

He quotes one school principal stating: "We are preparing a generation of robots. Kids are learning exclusively through rote. We have children who are given no conceptual framework. They do not learn to think, because their teachers are straitjacketed by tests that measure only isolated skills. As a result, they can be given no electives, nothing wonderful or fanciful or beautiful, nothing that touches the spirit or the soul." (p. 143)

Far from improving student performance, such teaching is just another step towards turning schools into concentration camps of the mind. The students aren't educated, but drilled for a narrow range of jobs, and drilled badly at that.

The poor are willing to sacrifice for education

But why do these miserable conditions persist? Spokesmen of the rich often pretend that the rich simply value education more than the poor, and so fund it more. What a vicious lie! Kozol points to the fact that inner-city residents generally tax themselves at far higher rates for the schools than do the rich districts. They want education for their children. But their poverty means that they can't generate much money by a property tax no matter how heavy their tax rates.

It is not the poor who won't sacrifice for education. No, it is the rich who don't want to spend anything on the schools of inner-city children. The capitalist rulers of this country have decided that large numbers of black and Hispanic

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School buildings: rundown and overcrowded

One out of eight school buildings are so rundown that they provide substandard conditions for learning, said the school superintendents surveyed by the American Association of School Administrators. The study, released in mid-November, found that the biggest problems were overcrowding, age, structural hazards, and poor heating. Some five million

school children attend school in these buildings.

Of course, it goes without saying that such buildings are mainly found in schools for working class and inner-city children. And the poor school districts with these buildings are forced to put the little money they have into emergency repairs and huge heating bills. ■

Students fight Maryland cutbacks

About 2,000 students from the University of Maryland marched and rallied against state cutbacks on November 11. Scores of protesters sat down in the middle of U.S. Highway 1 and blocked traffic for two hours. The police attacked the demonstration and arrested 11 students and a professor.

The students denounced a 20% cut over two years in state funding for UM and other state universities. Due to the cuts, the university administration announced the termination of 13 English instructors and the cancellation of literature courses and enrollment slots for 1,500 students. ■

Detroit high school students boo governor

Detroit high school students protested against Governor Engler's slashing of social programs on November 13.

Engler visited Cass Tech High School to help launch President Bush's "America 2,000" program for education. This program sets a number of goals to supposedly improve the schools, but neither Bush nor Engler have been willing to put any significant amount of money behind it. Indeed, Engler has slashed special grants to education in Detroit and other cities.

The two-thousand plus students gathered for the event stood up obediently, then booed Engler as he walked on to the stage. They defied the school administration's warnings that anyone partici-

pating in such demonstrations against the governor would be suspended or expelled.

High school band members also protested by wearing black armbands while performing for the event. As well, a petition was distributed throughout the school which stated that the students of Cass Tech do not support the governor or his cuts in General Assistance, other social programs, and the arts. Nearly 1,000 of the school's 3,600 students signed the petition in just two days time. The students won't stand for Engler or Bush's hypocrisy of telling voters that they support education, but at the same time cutting education funds. ■

They don't want to give a penny to working class schools

The richest school districts in Michigan are up in arms. Their funding is going up, but less than they had expected. A state law passed earlier this year would force them this year to share a mere \$23 per pupil with poorer districts which may have, say, \$3,000 to \$4,000 less per pupil than they do. Yet the richer districts are shouting about "Robin Hood" laws, and some of them have gotten a judge to suspend operation of the law for the time being.

Well, what do you know. The rich districts lecture the poor districts that they don't need more money, but just to reorder their priorities. But as soon as the rich districts have to part with a few pennies, they shout about ruinous cutbacks. Suddenly money is important after all. It isn't that they don't think money is needed for education, it's just that they don't give a damn about the education of working class and minority children.

In Michigan, the very richest public school districts spend almost \$8,500 per pupil, while the poorest spend only \$2,500. This means some pupils have well over three times more spent on their

education than others. At a time when the schools for children of working and poor people are starved for cash, these huge discrepancies are a major scandal. Detroit schools, for example, even lack sufficient textbooks.

Despite the shouts of the rich districts, the Michigan state legislature didn't have the slightest intention of equalizing spending between the different school districts. Still less was the legislature going to provide sufficient funds to Detroit or to the even poorer districts. Instead the politicians shouted about their commitment to equal funding, but passed a bill that allows the funding gap to keep growing. It is a token bill to pacify the people, and it merely slows down how fast the gap is to grow. (It calls for pooling the property tax, but not on all property, and not on any residential property at all, but on half the increase in the commercial and industrial tax base.) But for some of the capitalist ruling class, even a penny for the poor was too much. ■

The struggle of the homeless

Defend the homeless — target capitalist system

In city after city, the wealthy and their politicians have attempted to deal with the growing homeless crisis by simply driving these people out of public buildings and parks. Out of sight, out of mind — this has been the basic policy of the heartless politicians of the rich.

But once the homeless begin to fight back then there is suddenly a lot of hand-wringing. Why, the bosses even let the workers collect food and used clothing to help out those who are freezing and hungry.

Still the bosses won't begin to address the roots of the homeless crisis. There is no talk of providing jobs — although huge layoffs by the capitalists are driving up the number of homeless people. There is no talk of providing decent wages — although a growing number of homeless people are workers who, faced with the capitalist wage cutting, can't make enough to rent an apartment. And

there is no talk of restoring the federal, state and local cuts in social programs — even though whittled down unemployment benefits, the elimination of General Assistance, and so forth have been driving people into homelessness.

For more than a decade the capitalist bosses have been waging an offensive to drive down the standard of living of the working masses, and this has created the conditions for the terrible homeless crisis that we face today. The filthy rich capitalists, and their bought-and-paid-for politicians, are not about to change their ways. It is up to the working class to fight against them.

It is not enough for the workers to collect food and clothing for the homeless. They must join them in the mass struggle. To defend the homeless we must target the capitalist bosses and build up the struggle against this entire man-eating system. ■

Detroit activists fight evictions

More than a dozen people rallied in front of the Phoenix Hotel in Detroit November 27 to fight the eviction of a series of tenants.

Most of the tenants had relied on General Assistance checks to pay their \$200-a-month rent. But in October, Michigan Governor Engler eliminated General Assistance, cutting off 90,000 people, nearly half of whom live in the Detroit area. At the Phoenix a notice was posted that tenants would be evicted the next day and the heat was turned off in most apartments. But confronted by the protesters, the landlord backed down. She turned the heat back on and claimed she was not evicting anyone. Earlier in the month, a similar protest blocked evictions at the Detroit residence.

Activists are demanding that the city order a moratorium on all evictions. On November 6, about 150 people formed a picket line in front of the City-County Building and then marched up to the 13th floor where the Detroit City Council was meeting. Police barred the door.

Homeless battle Detroit police over tent city

Homeless protesters set up a tent city outside the Jeffries Homes housing project in Detroit on November 11. There are more than 1,000 vacant apartments in this project and demonstrators demanded they be opened for the homeless. At the end of October about 250 people confronted police during a sit-in at some of the vacant apartments. This time they set up tents to shelter 70 homeless people and to shame Mayor Young, Governor Engler, and the Bush government for their mistreatment of the poor.

Police arrived at the scene quickly, ordered the protesters out, tore down the tents, and seized the largest one. But about 25 angry protesters marched into one of the Jeffries buildings and occupied the basement.

City council President Maryann Mahaffey showed up and told the demonstrators they could stay if they remained peaceful. While arguing with the protesters, Mahaffey admitted that many people had moved out of the projects because

But protesters kept up such loud chanting that City Council President Maryann Mahaffey was forced to open a separate room to meet with them.

Mahaffey whined that "What you are asking is illegal. The council cannot do anything to interfere with private property." Activists denounced this lie. They pointed out that the city had seized and leveled an entire neighborhood of private homes and businesses in order to provide land to General Motors to build its Hamtramck Assembly Plant. Obviously the city can and does interfere with private property when it's in the interest of the wealthy capitalists. But when it comes to the needs of the working people and poor they always cry their hands are tied.

Unable to shut up the protesters, Mahaffey left. And then the police appeared and hauled off two of the protest leaders. Police repression is the city council's answer to the plight of the homeless. ■

they were told the buildings would be torn down and that many apartments had been left vacant for eight years because the city felt there was "too high a density in public housing." In other words, the city has been systematically destroying public housing and putting its funds into higher-priced projects.

After Mahaffey left, the police moved in and ordered protesters out of the building. Four who refused were arrested. As they were hauled off other protesters shouted "Sieg heil!" and "Ruff, ruff! Who let the dogs out?" One activist was hit by a police car, after scuffling with the police, and had to be taken to the hospital.

Mayor Young attacks the homeless

Facing the growing mass outrage over the plight of the homeless, Mayor Young declared on November 12 that "No one will go homeless or hungry in Detroit." But his breast pocket was empty.

Although some 1,700 public housing



Homeless activists confront Detroit police in late October

apartments are vacant in the city, he promised to open only about 260 within a month. He also promised to eventually, by the end of winter, add 3,000 beds to the city's 1,200 bed homeless shelters and to open another 500 or so apartments. And this emergency band-aid is to be funded not by taxing the rich but, rather, by taking away money that had been allocated to a number of community groups. In a city where it is estimated that there are from 40,000 to 65,000 homeless people, Young's program is little help. Indeed, three homeless men were found dead from the cold snap that hit the city a few weeks later.

The homeless activists were outraged at Mayor Young's piddling program and determined to keep up their protests. They set up another tent city in a vacant lot across from the Jeffries Home projects. But police again showed up to tear down the tents. In the angry confrontation one protester was arrested and

another injured.

During the next two weeks, activists defied the police and set up four more tent cities. Eventually they moved to a privately owned lot where a church granted them permission to set up tents. But Mayor Young was bent on crushing the protests. He bellowed "If I allow any group to do that, I might as well give up control of the goddamned city." And Police Chief Knox claimed the problem was outside "agitators," not homeless people.

The police repeatedly tore down and seized the tents. And nearly thirty people have been arrested in the confrontations. Late in November, the Wayne County Circuit Court ordered a compromise. The police were told to stop tearing down the tents. But the protesters were banned from sleeping or cooking in the tents.

Obviously the city and courts are more concerned with stopping the protests than helping the homeless. ■

Will Kemp help the homeless?

In the wake of homeless protests in Detroit, Jack Kemp, Bush's head of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), leaped into the spotlight to claim he would solve the homeless crisis.

On November 19, Kemp held a meeting with Mayor Young, Senator Donald Riegle and Governor Engler. They announced they would form an action team which could spare \$229 million in federal money to repair public housing, shelter homeless people and promote tenant management and other Kemp initiatives.

After years of slashing federal money for the homeless, this sounded like a

god-send. But people should not get their hopes up.

It turns out that Kemp is not simply giving Detroit all this money. Rather, it has to be applied for through dozens of separate federal programs. Even though Kemp promised that the action team will be allowed to cut through a lot of bureaucratic red tape, it will take months before Detroiters see any of it. And, unless the protesters keep fighting, there's a good chance most of the money will never reach the homeless.

Despite all of his sweet talk, it has to

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See KEMP

The stone age? No, the Bush age.



Wayne Davis, an unemployed worker in southern Ohio, lives with a dozen others in a cave because they cannot afford a home

Racist Duke defeated in Louisiana

"Rather a lizard than a wizard!" "Rather a crook than the Klan!" Following these and similar slogans, the people of Louisiana overwhelmingly rejected David Duke in the November elections for governor.

Unfortunately there was no independent voice for the working masses in this election. There was no one campaigning for jobs or for health care or for a stop to the cutback offensive against wages and social programs. There was no one demanding that the capitalists pay for the

economic crisis. There was no one crusading against the rich man's assault on the rights of minorities and immigrants and women.

The masses were offered only the Republican David Duke — a former Nazi and Grand Dragon of the KKK, who himself claimed he had support from billion-dollar corporations. (*New York Times*, Nov. 13) Or they could choose the good-ole-boy racism of Democrat Edwin Edwards — an admittedly corrupt politician who loudly campaigned for the

interests of big business.

They came out in unprecedented numbers to vote — against Duke — including nearly all black people and at least 75% of those workers of all races who had incomes below \$15,000 a year. Exit polls showed that nearly 50% of those who voted for Edwards did so simply because they did not want Duke for governor.

The rejection of Duke is important. He is not simply some two-bit racist. Rather, he is a stalking horse for the capitalists. A politician groomed to proclaim forthrightly what Bush and Congress push with "kinder and gentler" language. A demagogue to whip up racist hysteria to split up the working class and roll back gains won through the mass struggle of the African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other minorities.

Duke was defeated in Louisiana. But

he is talking about taking his racist crusade to the presidential elections. And, what is more, the policies he advocated are being put in place, piece after piece, by the White House and Congress and in one state after the other.

The mass outrage that surfaced against Duke must be built into something broader, into a struggle to organize the working class in its own right. We must unite the workers of every nationality to stand up to the racist drive not only of Duke but, also, of Bush and Congress and the courts. We must rally the workers independently from the Republicans and Democrats alike, to stand as a class against the capitalists' takeback offensive. We must organize so the choice is not between a crook and the klan but, instead, for the working class against the rich exploiters. Down with Duke! Down with all the capitalist politicians! ■



Roadside rally in Louisiana against David Duke

Bush plays godfather to Duke's racism

In November, President Bush belatedly announced that he would not support David Duke, even though he had become the Republican candidate for governor of Louisiana. Bush declared he had to "position" himself against someone who was so recently a "member of the Nazis."

But then the President was unable to say a word against this Nazi's political program. Duke's election campaign centered principally on demagogic appeals against "affirmative action quotas," against the "liberal social welfare system," and for a war on "drugs and crime." And Bush himself has been the godfather of these code words for a racist crusade against the masses.

Bush OK's Mississippi racist

Indeed, even while distancing himself from Duke, Bush proclaimed the election to governor of Republican Kirk Fordice "a great victory in Mississippi."

But just like Duke, Fordice had focused his campaign on opposition to "quotas" and for replacing "welfare with workfare." This, of course, is the racism officially sanctioned by the Republican party. Bush could celebrate that "victory" even while decrying a maverick like Duke.

"Quotas," the code word for job discrimination

Of course, Bush himself made "quotas" a national issue by campaigning for two years against the civil rights bill. He only signed the bill after the Democrats had watered down the legislation — even writing a ban on quotas into it — to the point that it may end up being used to wipe out programs to aid minorities.

In fact, the Bush administration wrote up orders to all federal agencies to use the bill's ban on quotas as a pretext to gut regulations against racial discrimination in the government and private companies. Although he dropped the order after an outcry erupted when it was leaked to the press, his spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Bush still left open the possibility of changing federal policy

based on the bill's quota ban.

Here, as in Louisiana and Mississippi, the issue really isn't "quotas." That is just a code word for eliminating any bars to racial discrimination. While studies have repeatedly shown that there is enormous job and promotion discrimination against blacks and other minorities, Bush pretends that anti-racist measures are really "reverse discrimination" against whites.

Duke has taken this lie to the extreme. On CNN's *Larry King Live*, for example, Duke claimed "I mean when you take a test for the post office in this country right now and you're white, you're very likely to have your test score dropped 15 to 20 points and if you are a minority you are liable to have it raised 15 to 20 points..." This was such a blatant lie that the U.S. Postal Service had to come out and denounce it, noting that the only change made in scores is to give veterans an extra five points, and disabled veterans 10 extra points.

Duke got caught in the lie. But Bush, using more vague language, tells the same lie every day, and the Democrats and courts bow to it.

Racist dog on a leash

Bush may be embarrassed by the more forthright lies of Duke. But his own racist crusade has created the conditions where a Nazi and Klansman can run as a respectable candidate just like any other capitalist politician.

Bush may distance himself from the more bloodthirsty racism of Duke. But it is only to keep the racist dog on a leash.

Like the slave masters of the South, the capitalists let out the racist dog Duke to threaten and terrorize minorities, and to whip up racist hysteria to split up the downtrodden. Then the dog is stuck under the porch, while the master eats his fill.

It's not enough to beat back the dog. We must organize to pull down the master and set the torch to this whole racist system. ■

News media boosts Duke

People keep asking how a two-bit racist like David Duke could gain such national attention and support?

Of course, one reason is that Bush and the Democrats have prepared the way for him with their own racist crusades against minorities and immigrants. But it is also the case that the news media has given Duke unprecedented coverage, vaulting him into the national spotlight.

Although Duke is fond of bashing the liberal media, these same liberals have given him unbelievable attention. *Good Morning America*, the *Donahue* show, CNN's *Larry King Live*, and *Nightline* all put him on the air. Of course there are some, like the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, that campaigned for Edwards against Duke. However others not only put the business-suited Klansman on the

air but, also, gave him the special conditions he asked for.

Donahue, for example, agreed that no footage would be shown of Duke in Klan regalia, and that there would be no broadcast of printed quotes from past interviews that might conflict with his newer lies. And *Nightline* departed from its normal debate format to broadcast Duke by himself the night before the elections. While Edwards declined to be on the show, Tyler Bridges — a reporter with the *Times-Picayune* — says he was dropped from the broadcast when Duke complained he was too adversarial.

The liberal broadcasters may not like Duke, but they serve the capitalists. And the capitalist agenda today is to promote racism. The workers must build up their own workers' press if they are going to mount a struggle against this racism. ■

Democrats campaign for big business

A lot is being said about Duke and the Republicans. But what about the Democrats? How did they oppose the racist "populism" of the ex-Grand Wizard of the Klan?

Well the Democrats did not really oppose Duke's racist campaign against quotas. After all, they had just written a ban on quotas into their own Civil Rights Bill. Their candidate in Louisiana, Edwin Edwards, could hardly touch that issue.

And they did not really fight Duke's racist crusade against "the liberal welfare system." After all, the Democrats in Congress wrote the national workfare bill that focused on attacking impoverished minority mothers. Indeed, Edwards only argued that welfare is already so low in Louisiana that to cut it would not help the budget crisis.

And they sure didn't fight against Duke's racist appeals for a war on "crime and drugs." Why it's Democrats who are heading up the police terror on minority communities in city after city. Edwards, who has been governor three times in the past, certainly could not stand against Duke here.

Nor did the Democrats expose Duke's demagogic claims that blacks are stealing the jobs of white workers. Since their own idea of "populism" is to blame Japanese and Mexicans for stealing "American" jobs, they could hardly denounce Duke's racist lies.

Instead of opposing Duke's platform, the Democrats campaigned that their candidate would be best for Louisiana businessmen.

Now Louisiana has been in a recession for nearly a decade. It has still not recovered from the collapse of the oil industry in the early 1980's which wiped out some 150,000 jobs. Louisiana ranks 49th among states in per capita income, and it has the largest gap between rich and poor. There is little wonder that there is tremendous worry among the masses over jobs, high taxes, and corruption or that there is great anger against the wealthy politicians.

But the Democrats addressed none of these concerns. Instead, their main campaign theme was that Duke would hurt the tourist, convention, and other businesses. Edwards, they yelled, would save the businessmen from "economic suicide."

Edwards explained his campaign this way: "What's important is not my past and not his [Duke's Nazi and KKK ties — ed.] but it's which of us can best bring stability to Louisiana."

Now it is no surprise that Edwards wants to hide his own past. He was last turned out of office in disgrace, up on corruption charges, and leaving the state with a \$1 billion budget deficit. But his pride at past wheeling-and-dealing could not help but slip out. When a reporter asked him if, in the 1971 governor's race, he had sold a spot on the Mineral Board to Jerome Glazer for a campaign contribution of \$75,000, Edwards replied that the figure was actually \$45,000 and that "I think Clyde skimmed \$30,000."

Continued on next page
See DEMOCRATS

Universal health care, or universal woe

Health care has become one of the biggest worries for millions of workers. Thirty-five million working people and children are not covered by any health plan at all, and tens of millions more have token plans that leave out the expensive things. Those workers with company-paid plans are having to wage strikes in order to prevent the escalation of fees and restrictions.

It is time for us all to stand up to the capitalists and declare that health care is a human right. There must be quality care for all the working class and poor. There must be a national system of universal care, paid for by government funds. We can no longer have the situation where millions toil long hours and yet have no coverage at all. We can no longer tolerate a situation where people are covered by plans so long as they are healthy and working, but lose their coverage when they fall ill and lose their jobs.

Furthermore, the lack of a universal system has resulted in the growing spread of epidemics, the lack of adequate preventative care, and the decay of even the mass vaccination system. Unless there is a universal system, there will be no solution to the growing health problems.

Oregon rations care for the poor

The capitalists have a different solution. For them, the health care crisis is

simply the problem of shifting the cost of health care onto the workers and the poor. It is all the same to them whether the poor get no care at all, or if they go hungry to pay for their care, so long as the capitalists don't pay.

The Oregon state legislature recently declared that it will only pay so much for medical care for the poor through Medicaid, and no more. It doesn't matter how much care is needed.

So Oregon classified all medical care into 709 medical conditions, and ranked them in terms of severity. It then determined that this year it only had enough money to pay for the first 587 conditions. If, for example, a poor person needs spinal disc surgery, condition number 588, tough luck.

The Oregon politicians try to make this plan sound like a step toward universal coverage. As *Time* magazine describes it: "In effect, Oregon is promising to provide universal coverage in exchange for a system of financial triage." (Nov. 25) But it is a lie. The coverage will depend on the value judgments Oregon doctors and politicians make about who should live and who should die. For example, "A child will get a liver transplant; a chronic alcoholic will not." God help you if you are a poor person who does not live up to the high moral (or at least financial) standards of Oregon puritans, for Oregon doctors surely won't.

Down with racism!

Chicago youth march against police murder

Hundreds of teen-agers marched on the Orland Park police station outside Chicago on November 11. They were burning with anger and demanded the police answer for the death of Christian Pyka.

The cops claim Pyka was found hanged by his own shirt in the police lock-up on November 8. But the youth don't believe it. Just moments before the supposed suicide, his friend Lyle Healy overheard police beating Pyka. Meanwhile, a coroner's report also indicated that Pyka had been beaten prior to his death. The youth believe this is a typical police murder, and they want the cops brought to justice.

Fire the racist cops in Alameda County, California

About 50 activists picketed the Alameda Police Department on November 1. They demanded the firing of racist cops.

The day before, information was leaked to the local news media that a number of cops had threatened attacks on the lives of local black people. The information was leaked from an audit of police department phone messages in October last year. It was also found that four of the cops made racist songs and "jokes" about dressing up in Klan sheets. Police Chief Robert Shiells has refused to give out the names of the cops involved.

Students say no to racism at University of Alabama

1,500 students marched against the growing racism at the University of Alabama the night of October 23.

The march was organized to protest the mocking of black people at a fraternity-sorority "swap" party. Some potential members painted their faces black, wore Afro wigs and put basketballs under their shirts to look pregnant.

This is the latest in a string of racist incidents. In 1986 a cross was burned in

front of the first black sorority to move onto Sorority Row. In 1987 a Confederate flag was displayed during "Old South" activities. And earlier this year, white fraternity members vandalized two black fraternity houses. The 1989 homecoming queen, who is black, was booed and had racist slurs flung at her during a football game halftime festivities. Her car was vandalized and her parents received threatening phone calls.

Minneapolis students fight white supremacists

Students at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis picketed the campus radio station on October 17. They denounced Tom David, the founder of the White Student Union, who was giving a radio interview.

Racist thugs connected with the White Student Union attacked the protesters with pipes, nunchaku, tear gas, and an attack dog. Three protesters had to be hospitalized. Outraged at the assault, students again demonstrated on November 21.

David is a raving bigot with links to the American Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan. He pours out his venom against immigrant workers who he says "come here to suck the blood of hard-working white people, who are forced to pay higher taxes to support these Third Worlders." David also raves against minorities, Jewish people, and homosexuals. Nevertheless, the student newspaper and radio station have carried his racist articles and speeches.

MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS:

■ CHICAGO:
1831 West 18th Street (one block east of 18th St. 'L' on Douglas line)
Phone: 243-5302

■ OAKLAND:
3232 Mt. King Way (old Grove St.),
Oakland, CA 94609
Phone: 453-4840

Welfare cutbacks kill Michigan woman

The Oregon politicians are, however, correct in asserting that they are not the only state to ration medical care. Take Michigan.

Republican Governor Engler says that no one will suffer from the elimination of General Assistance. Anyone who really needs help will be taken care of. In a box.

Eva Frederick of Traverse City died this month after the welfare checks that had paid for her blood pressure medicine were stopped. She had been receiving \$434 per month, \$269 of which went for blood pressure pills. She applied for emergency medical assistance but Engler's Department of Social Services ruled that blood pressure is not a "life-threatening" condition. She tried to stretch her supply of the pills by cutting her dosage in half. But she collapsed and died while waiting for a bus after an adult education class.

It should be noted that, public statements aside, this was by no means a setback for Engler's program. To have given her medicine would have been a "budget-threatening" condition, while her death wipes the books clean.

The end to CountyCare?

More cases like Eva Frederick are expected. Engler's budget cuts threaten to close down Wayne County's health maintenance organization for the poor, called CountyCare. This will affect 47,000 poor people in Detroit and throughout the county. Almost 10,000 people in this program suffer from high blood pressure, over 3,000 are diabetic, another 3,000 have cancer, and 2,000 are asthmatics. Some have multiple conditions.

CountyCare was instituted in 1988 to hold down costs by putting the poor into their own "HMO." It has been highly praised by the National Association of Counties for its efficiency. But in the eyes of Engler, anything at all for the poor is too much. He thinks the poor shouldn't have any rights at all, and has suggested, for example, that the poor shouldn't have the right to sue for malpractice when the government is paying their doctors' bills. (*Detroit Free Press*, Nov. 1) They should be grateful for any attention at all, even if it is malpractice, thinks this fine example of the modern capitalist gentleman.

"Self-insured" companies can cut workers' health benefits

But if you are covered by an employer-paid plan, you won't be subject to the indignities of the Oregon and Michigan poor.

Or will you? Better check to see whether your employer is having an insurance company pay for your medical care, and not simply paying the costs himself, which is called "self-insurance."

A worker in a Houston, Texas firm was covered by health insurance that covered claims to the value of one million dollars. He suffered the tragedy of contracting AIDS, and notified his firm. They later informed him that, upon considering the matter, they had changed their health plan to exclude covering AIDS, except up to \$5,000. Mind you, they were supposedly doing this for the highest of motives: in order to be able to cover other workers. Unless, of course, these other workers also needed expensive treatment, in which case the company might decide that it would have to exclude that treatment as well.

The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals said this was legal. The company could go back on its promises, and could arbitrarily exclude whatever treatment it wanted, because it had become self-insured. It had decided to exclude treat-

ment for alcohol and drug abuse, and it placed a \$5,000 cap on treatment for AIDS. Not only was this legal, but the court explicitly said that even if the company excluded AIDS treatment "from some 'prejudice' against AIDS or its victims generally," this was still legal. The court said that a 1974 law concerning employee benefits plans did not apply, and that the company could do pretty much whatever it liked. (*New York Times*, Nov. 27)

This case is likely to go to the U.S. Supreme Court. Presently as many as half the workers with company health benefits are in "self-insured" plans, so this case is of tremendous importance.

More epidemics

Meanwhile, deteriorating housing and living conditions in the cities, and the elimination of health clinics in neighborhoods, schools and elsewhere, is providing soil for the spread of epidemics.

For example, TB is a social disease — a disease that spreads in bad housing and living conditions. New strains of TB that resist the usual treatment are appearing in New York City, in Michigan, and elsewhere. And in mid-November it was announced that 12 prison inmates and one guard, all already ill with other diseases, were killed by such TB in a New York state prison.

There are special obstacles to the treatment of diseases which can be transmitted sexually. Many conservatives, religious figures, and moralists resist the spread of information on these diseases, and especially oppose providing knowledge to young people or through the schools, preferring instead to lecture that the only safe sex is abstinence. Public health expenditures are inadequate. A stigma is attached to such diseases, no matter how they are contracted. All this worsens a situation which has fed like wildfire on the growing spread of poverty and desperation.

The result has been the appearance of new resistant strains of diseases like syphilis. Treatment has thus become that much harder. Meanwhile such menaces as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), for example, spread ever more widely. It now affects over a million women a year, with more than one in four suffering long-term effects.

Not bandaids, but mass action

Minor tinkering with private insurance plans won't solve these growing problems. Nor will elaborate schemes patching together a maze of conflicting private and government plans. A full, universal system, financed by taxing the corporations and the wealthy, is needed.

Moreover, under the system of medicine for profit, the mobilization of the people to deal with health issues can only go so far, even with a universal system. We need a system based on the mass participation of the workers, not simply following the orders of the medical elite and the bureaucrats. The full achievement of such a system requires workers' socialism, where all of society is run by the people and not by a privileged few living in fear of the masses sharing their palaces.

DEMOCRATS

Continued from prev. page

Edwards is the epitome of the corrupt politician in the back pocket of the capitalist businessmen. A good-ole-boy holding on to the traditional racism of the southern rich. Obviously, the Democrats are no real alternative to Duke racism. The masses must get organized independently of both and fight for their own interests against the capitalists and their entire racist system.

Which way out of the economic crisis?

Continued from front page

discussed.

Workers' wages have been declining since the early 1970's. Their benefits are not secure either. In most contract battles these days, workers are being faced with demands from the employers to cut back on their health care.

Neither are pensions secure. Over the last decade, greedy corporate sharks have repeatedly raided workers' pension funds for their takeover adventures. Now it turns out that government workers' pension funds are also being ripped off. In November, it was revealed that state and local governments, from New York to California, are raiding public employee pension funds to solve their budget problems. And to top off this bad news, it turns out that state and local public pensions are not federally insured!

While the schools where workers' kids go decline, college education gets further and further out of reach. The state college systems are increasing fees and cutting classes.

For the poor, the "safety net" is all but worn out. On Reagan's cue, welfare benefits have been squeezed harder and harder for a decade. Now, entire programs such as General Assistance (welfare for single adults) are simply being wiped out. This year in Michigan, next year in Ohio. In Maryland it was slashed in half.

Note this. The businessmen and capitalist experts openly admit that even when the current recession is over, none of the above trends will change. In other words, working and poor people will be faced with years of stagnation and further decline.

Class divisions get sharper

Of course, the news is not grim for everyone in the U.S. The wealthy fatcats are still swimming in money. And during the recession, they are working damned hard that they make out well while the working people get the shaft.

Both the current recession and the underlying problems of the U.S. economy are helping to bring out the fact that there is not one America, but two. This society, like every other capitalist society, is divided into classes. The rich, the class which owns the economy, is on top, while the class whose labor is exploited is on the bottom.

The wealthy will not give the workers anything without a struggle. Even the smallest measures of relief for the masses are opposed by the businessmen and their politicians. Congress and White House may debate tax cuts, but they are talking of small change when it comes to working people. And while every bit of relief is welcome, small change will not meet the needs of the people today.

The workers are thus faced with a choice: if we simply leave things as they are, things are bound to get worse. If we merely leave it to the politicians, Republican or Democratic, we should not expect much — for both parties are beholden to the same moneyed interests. If we want to change things in our interest, we will have to fight for it ourselves. We have to launch our own mass struggles, we have to get ourselves organized.

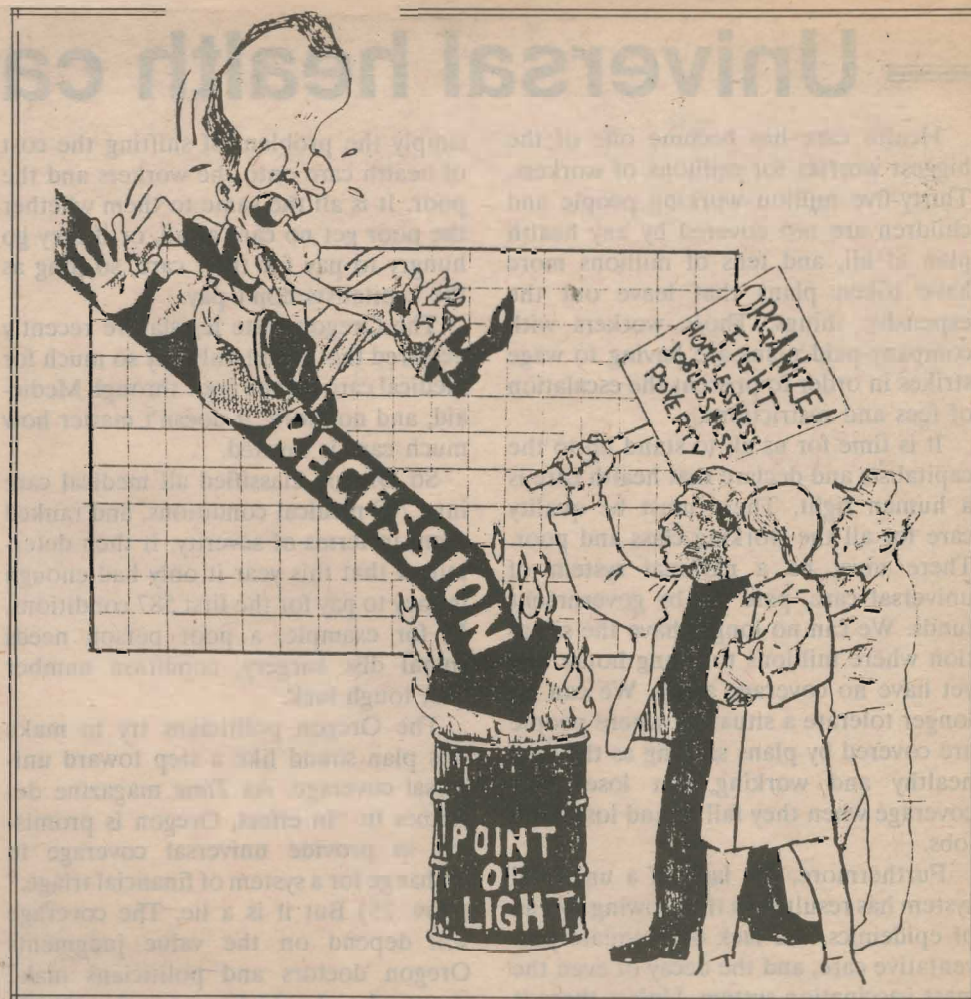
Around the country, you can see some struggles breaking out. The homeless protests in Detroit, Chicago, and elsewhere. Students opposing cutbacks. Women defending abortion rights. A new round of workers' strikes and organizing drives. The struggles are still few and scattered, but they can point towards a

new wave of working people's struggle if more workers recognize that the times are such that they have to join in struggle to defend their interests and needs.

Mass struggles are essential to force improvements in favor of the working people. But we need a longer term perspective as well. Life has amply shown that as long as capitalism exists, as long as the rich hold power, any gains we make are in danger of being taken away.

And it is not just that the rich are oppressing us, but the current hard times are also bringing out that the system as a whole is unstable. Since the S&L crisis, many banks are teetering on the edge of collapse. Huge amounts of commercial property remain empty. Many industries are up to their ears in huge debts. The government is in red ink everywhere too. The farm crisis continues to fester. This suggests that the system is rotting at its foundations, and may be too sick to be simply patched together. The old realities of life in this country may be coming to an end. They will be replaced by either renovating capitalism at the expense of the added misery of millions, or by something new and different.

The only way to make a lasting change of benefit to the workers is to turn this system upside down. It is for the workers to take the reins of political and econom-



ic power and to do away with a system based on enriching the few at the expense of the working majority. It is for the workers to do away with a system based on personal greed and the profit motive and replace it with a society run by the workers for the interests of all who labor. A system of workers' socialism, where the workers through their

organizations will rule, not a system of state-capitalist fake socialism as in Russia and eastern Europe where wealthy bureaucrats ruled in the name of the workers.

Class struggle and the fight for workers' socialism — that is what the Marxist-Leninist Party stands for.

Bankers show who really rules

Last month there was a dramatic demonstration of who really holds power in the U.S.

We stand in the middle of a wrenching recession. Working people are being squeezed hard by job losses, high prices, and stagnating income. They are overburdened with debt.

Meanwhile, the banks continue to gouge the working people on consumer credit. It is a scandal that the interest rates on credit card purchases remain astronomically high, while the interest rates that the banks pay for money have steadily been falling. Since mid-1990 the bank funds rate has been cut 13 times and now stands at 4.75%. But the credit card rate stands near 20%.

The government has known this all along and found it acceptable. Why? Because it agreed with the banks that the consumer should be gouged. *Business Week*, a magazine for business people, even recently acknowledged, "...despite lip service to lower rates, Washington has tolerated and even encouraged banks to soak the consumer — to prop up the [banking] industry." And how much profit do banks make out of credit cards? A great deal — banks expect pre-tax profits of \$5.83 billion for 1991.

But the recession persists, and in early November official Washington got a bid edge. President Bush declared that banks should reduce interest rates on credit cards. The Senate took the cue, passing a Republican-sponsored bill that would cap such interest rates. And the House scheduled hearings on the issue.

Immediately there was a howl of protest from the banks. It was echoed on Wall Street. Bank stocks plunged, one of the reasons behind the 120 point decline of the Dow Jones average on Friday, November 15.

This way the bankers and big money men had had their say. Immediately the politicians in Washington retreated. The White House suggested that capping credit card rates had just been some crazy Democratic idea. Meanwhile, the

Democrats on Capitol Hill quickly cancelled plans for their hearings and the whole idea is dead in the water.

The lesson here? It is not the people, nor even "our elected representatives," who rule the country. It is the bankers and big money men. Buffeted by the recession and growing unrest among the masses, the politicians briefly flirted with

capping consumer interest rates. But once the bankers had their say, the politicians took their place at the feet of the capitalists.

Marxists have long maintained that the government is merely the executive committee of the class that owns and controls the economy. This stands proven once again.

INEQUALITIES Continued from page 8

children, and of other working class children too, should only be given job training, while real education should be preserved for others. Kozol points out that "investment strategies in education, as we've seen, are often framed in the same terms: 'How much is it worth investing in this child as opposed to that one? Where will we see the best return?' Although respectable newspapers rarely pose the question in these chilling terms, it is clear that certain choices have been made..." (p. 117)

Part of a broader issue

The devastation of the inner-city schools is one of the most cynical and sinister parts of the ongoing capitalist assault on the working class. With a noble passion, Kozol champions the most downtrodden and racially discriminated section of the masses. His description is of value to all workers, whether they live in the inner-city or not. If the working class is to raise up in a powerful struggle, it too has to champion the cause of the inner-city masses. This will cement working-class unity, push forward the anti-racist struggle, and exercise a strong moral influence on all those discontented with present-day society.

But Kozol has a hard time seeing that the growing oppression of the inner-city is related to the general offensive against all working people. His perspective is in large part limited to the contrast of the

inner-city versus the wealthier suburbs. He himself says the issues are more complex than this, but he generally restricts himself to this contrast.

For this reason, he doesn't see what forces will arise to fight the hellish conditions he chronicles. One sees him pondering what support there is for the inner-cities by discussing what children in one of the wealthier suburbs say. He doesn't consider the class struggle, but instead seems to be looking for some sign that capitalist society will regain some liberal sentiment.

Nevertheless, his book is a valuable exposure of the present conditions of the schools. It penetrates the fog of unreality that Bush and the politicians have spread over the crisis of education. And it shows the corrupt racism that pervades the school system and present-day life in capitalist America.

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Bush sends Haitian refugees back to military tyrants

Ever since the military seized back power in Haiti on September 30, conditions for the Haitian people have been getting worse. Students and activists in Haiti's slums have kept up resistance to the military tyranny in the face of bloody repression.

But thousands more cannot put up with the misery and are fleeing Haiti in boats to other parts of the Caribbean and the U.S. Hundreds have drowned as their overloaded boats have sunk. But besides the elements, they have also had to contend with another ferocious obstacle — the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard.

The Navy and Coast Guard were routinely picking up the refugees and taking them back to the arms of tyranny in Haiti. Some 500 people were sent back this way. Their fate is unknown.

For the moment, a court injunction has stopped the government from returning more refugees to Haiti. Instead now, the U.S. is setting up internment centers for the refugees at Guantanamo military base on the island of Cuba. But the Bush administration is fighting hard to go back

to its policy of returning the refugees.

Only one word can describe the reason behind the cruel U.S. policy: RACISM. The U.S. itself claims that the present government in Haiti is illegitimate and it is sponsoring an embargo against Haiti. Then when people flee their desperate conditions, the U.S. turns around and says that the Haitians aren't real political refugees, they are just seeking a better economic life. This continues the long-standing racist policy of finding one pretext or another to keep out the black Haitians.

What is more, the refugee policy shows that the U.S. stance towards the Haitian military regime isn't as straightforward as it appears. True, the U.S. still demands the return of the overthrown civilian president Aristide, but what can it possibly mean when the U.S. is willing to send refugees back to the arms of an "illegitimate" regime? U.S. officials have even been quoted as denying that there are massacres and other persecution going on in Haiti today, a blatant lie.

The U.S. government may still want

to negotiate a return of Aristide, because they think that if he were back in power, he could best control the Haitian masses and he would be beholden to Washington. But at the same time, U.S. imperialism is also cunningly preparing conditions for coming to terms to deal with the military regime; after all the Haitian military has long had close relations with Washington, cemented under the U.S.-

backed tyranny of the Duvaliers from the late 1950's on.

The Haitian military is proceeding rapidly to set up a proper civilian face for itself by announcing new elections in January. What stand will Bush take then? Will he then declare that some type of democracy has been restored? Don't count it out.

General strikes hit Europe

Continued from back page

paralyzed by a general strike on October 23. Factories, mines, schools, and stores were shut down in a protest against layoffs planned in government-owned industries.

The strike was enforced by some 5,000 flying pickets, who set up pickets around stores and office buildings. Asturias was completely cut off from the rest of Spain, as the strike shut down all transport.

Rallies were held in many cities, especially in Oviedo, where 100,000 gathered. A small band of fascists waving Nazi flags tried to sabotage the rally, but they were swept aside by the workers.

The social-democratic government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez is carrying out a policy of economic "reconversion" which involves privatization and cutbacks in government-owned enterprises. Tens of thousands of jobs have already been lost in Asturias, and the government is planning to cut tens of thousands more.

Which way forward?

The recent wave of protest strikes bring out the truth that workers will have to stand up in struggle if they are to

defend their wages and benefits, working conditions and job security. At the same time, being limited to one day affairs or even less (as in Italy), they mainly provided glimpses into the potential of workers' struggles. As well, the recent actions revealed the sorry role of the present trade union leaders.

To develop their potential into actual strength, workers cannot follow the lead of the reformist trade union leaders. The reformists are wedded to the policy of collaborating with the exploiters. The workers must transform the union movement and build their own militant organizations of the rank and file. And to permanently rid themselves of economic crisis and exploitation, they must eliminate the exploiting, capitalist system that divides Europe into two parts, the Europe of the rich and that of the poor. The workers must build up revolutionary organization, organization dedicated to establishing workers' socialism and then communism — a just society opposed to both "free market" capitalism and the state-capitalist system that paraded as socialism in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Mill workers block transport in Bangladesh



On October 28, jute and textile workers carried out a 12-hour blockade of highways and railways around Bangladesh.

From dawn to dusk, no long-distance buses or trucks left the capital Dhaka or the port cities of Khulna and Chittagong. The few trains which left the major cities were blocked by workers' demonstrations and could not travel far. Most had to return back.

At Tongi industrial area on the outskirts of Dhaka, workers used logs to block traffic. They also confronted police attacks there. Around the country, some 100 workers were injured in clashes with

the police and thugs of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The jute and textile mill workers are demanding improved pay, working conditions and job security. As the next step of their action program, the workers' unions announced plans for another transport blockade on November 25, this time for 48 hours.

Meanwhile, on November 20, several thousand garment workers marched through Dhaka to protest the layoff of 2,000 workers at two clothing plants. Workers clashed with police and company thugs; as many as 200 workers were reported injured.

General strike sweeps S. Africa



South Africa workers during general strike

Continued from front page

on a new constitution for South Africa between most of the political forces in the country. President De Klerk had promised these talks in the spring of 1990 when he decided to seek a deal with the ANC and its allies.

The huge mass upsurge of the 1980's had forced the racist ruling class to recognize that it could no longer rule in the old way, through apartheid backed by mass repression of the black majority. Instead, it was now going to try maintain as much of the political and economic privileges of the white minority as possible through a deal with the black movement. Most likely, the deal would be brokered with the ANC, but at the same time, the racist establishment set out to weaken it and the rest of the anti-apartheid opposition through encouraging Inkatha-style violence and similar dirty acts.

South Africa needs radical change to sweep away the racist backwardness.



Rally of 100,000 in Oviedo, Spain during general strike

Struggle by the oppressed masses is vital to realize such change, though this does not preclude raising militant demands in constitutional talks. However, the reformist ANC is too accommodating to the establishment. Nor has a revolutionary leadership congealed among the black masses, despite widespread revolutionary and militant sentiment.

Many in the anti-racist movement had demanded a constituent assembly based on elections open to all citizens to be responsible for drawing up a new constitution. But the racist government did not want such an assembly. And the ANC, despite giving lip service to the demand, was not interested in fighting for it. Instead, constitutional talks will take place between the government, the ANC and its allies, the white liberals of the Democratic Party, Buthelezi's Inkatha, and the apartheid-appointed leaders of

the so-called "black homelands." This is a convention stacked in favor of the racists. But it doesn't mean that all is settled in their favor.

The November general strike was a dramatic display of the power of the black masses. Mass struggle and a revolutionary policy is the best means to ensure that the oppressed majority makes the biggest gains out of the negotiations in the works.



The world in struggle



General strikes hit Europe

On December 9-10 in Maastricht, Holland, leaders of the European Community (EC) will sign a new treaty on economic and monetary union. They may also agree to closer political union, although there are still disagreements over that. Monetary union will mean that the 12-member EC will share a single currency and a central bank. By the end of 1992, it is hoped that the EC will become a single market, where goods, services, capital, and people can freely move across national borders.

Across Europe, there is much noise being made about the "single European family" and how the unified Europe of 1992 will mean a new era for all Europeans. But the fact remains, there are two Europes — and even after 1992, there will be two Europes: the Europe of the capitalists and the Europe of the working people. Europe 1992 may give a new boost to the big monopolies, but it will remain divided on class lines. And only workers' struggles will defend the interests of labor. The unity of workers across Europe will be even more urgent as the working class faces the new and larger combinations of capitalist monopolies which are now taking shape.

The fact that Europe remains split along class lines was recently brought home by a spate of general strikes and other workers' actions. General strikes were held in France, Spain, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands and Belgium.

FRANCE: Workers in motion

In France a general strike on October 24 disrupted rail, sea, air and road transport. It protested low wages and layoffs. Paris subway and suburban rail service was halted; the main Paris airport was blocked by airport workers; dockers struck; and electricity workers forced cutbacks in power. Tens of thousands marched in Paris, and nurses and Renault auto workers began ongoing strikes.

Lack of unity prevented the strike from being more successful. This was evident in Paris, where two separate rallies were held, one sponsored by the conservative Force Ouvriere union feder-

ation, which has many civil service workers, and one sponsored by the CGT federation affiliated with the Communist Party. (The French CP is communist in name only and has carried on a reformist policy for decades.)

Nurses demonstrate, strike

Nurses have been demonstrating weekly in Paris. They are demanding better staffing and higher pay. On October 17 thousands of angry nurses fought police, who used tear gas and a water cannon to stop the nurses from marching on the Elysee Palace. On October 23 the nurses launched a strike.

Renault auto workers strike

Renault auto plants in France were shut down by strikes for two weeks in October-November.

Over the last eight years, Renault's work force has been reduced from 105,000 to 65,000. In September management announced plans to cut another 25,000 jobs over the next seven years. Following this announcement, work stoppages spread through Renault plants. Workers demanded negotiations with management. When this was refused, workers at one plant began blocking gates. Management then locked out workers at all the plants.

Besides the job cutbacks, workers are also angry about the cuts in pay they have suffered in recent years. Newly hired workers receive only the legal minimum wage, and high-seniority workers do not get much more.

The Minister of Labor intervened in the strike and declared that strikers must allow "freedom to work" — that is, their pickets must be removed. But in a mass meeting workers voted to defy the government order. Workers at the plant in Cleon, Normandy, shut down the plant with mass pickets, sometimes with 1,000 workers.

The Renault strike saw some international solidarity. A message of support for the French workers was sent from Renault workers in Brazil. And at the same time a Renault factory in Colombia was shut down by strike action. But the



Strikers block gates at Renault auto plant in France

movement for international solidarity was undermined by the union leaders' chauvinism. In the midst of the strike the CGT leaders launched a campaign to cooperate with the auto capitalists in waging "a battle on the European front against the Japanese." And some union leaders played into the hands of the capitalists' racist campaign to split the working class, claiming that the workers on strike were "pure French" and opposed to "slant-eyes."

The bureaucrats undermined the strike in other ways too. While the workers organized huge mass meetings where they vowed to "hold on," publications of the CP, the CGT's parent party, carried stories saying the workers were ready and willing to go back.

On November 8, the strike was broken by a police terrorist action combined with sabotage by the labor bureaucrats. At the major Renault plant in Cleon, hundreds of riot police raided the workers' picket lines at 3:30 a.m., broke the picket line, and opened up the strike-bound plant. Two days later the workers voted to continue the strike, but the CGT union leaders came to a backroom

deal with management and ordered the workers back to their jobs.

ITALY: Strike for health care

A four-hour general strike on October 22 called out millions of workers in Italy. The strike was a protest against austerity measures planned by the government. This includes increasing charges on workers for health care. Rallies were held in many cities.

GREECE: Workers oppose austerity

A general strike on November 7 shut down public transport. Strikers held a mass demonstration in Athens and marched on parliament chanting slogans against the policies of the government headed by rightist Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis.

SPAIN: Workers protest privatization

The region of Asturias in Spain was

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Anti-Nazi protests in Germany

November 8 was the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night in 1938 when Hitler's Nazis carried out a nationwide pogrom against Jews. The Nazis burned synagogues, smashed homes and stores, forced Jews into concentration camps and paved the road towards the Holocaust.

This year the neo-Nazis in Germany announced they would celebrate Kristallnacht with commemorative marches in German cities, especially in Halle. So far this year the neo-Nazis have carried out hundreds of assaults on immigrant workers and their families.

Progressive people organized to stop the Nazis and to declare "never again" to the specter of fascism. Anti-racist demonstrations were held in over 30 cities and included some 100,000 people. In Berlin alone some 50,000 people marched. Many people wore buttons saying "I'm a foreigner too."

In Halle, trade union leaders refused workers' requests to organize contingents of workers to confront the fascists. Nonetheless, some 2-3,000 progressive people showed up on their own. From all of

Germany the neo-Nazis gathered no more than 400 thugs who marched behind massive police protection. The city government mobilized 1,600 policemen to guard the fascists; federal riot police were also brought in to set up roadblocks and occupy the town center. Hundreds of people were arrested trying to break through the police lines and get their hands on the fascists.

The huge anti-fascist demonstrations expressed the progressive sentiment widespread in Germany. But the politicians who organized many of the demonstrations belong to the same parliamentary parties that are pushing curbs and quotas on immigrants. The Social Democrats, for instance, are pushing for immigrants to be forced into "collection" centers, while the Greens are calling for quotas. This can only undermine the struggle against racism, and for full rights for the immigrant workers. Rejection of such policies is needed to build a militant movement based among the workers of different nationalities. ■

IN BRIEF

General strike in Venezuela

On November 7, one and a half million workers shut down Caracas and Ciudad Guyana in a 12-hour strike to protest gasoline price increases.

Students supported striking workers. A few weeks earlier, 30,000 students had marched through Caracas to oppose cuts in education. They painted over the Congress building with insults against President Carlos Andres Perez and the politicians. ■

Striking miners resist Honduran army

Miners at the U.S.-owned American Pacific mine went on strike in October to protest the firings of 50 workers. They occupied the highway leading to the mine in western Honduras. On October 23, army troops were deployed to disperse the workers off the highway. But miners, supported by students and other working people, have resisted the military's attacks. ■

Workers in Barbados launch general strike

30,000 workers marched November 11 in Bridgetown, Barbados, to kick off a 48-hour general strike that shut down most business and disrupted government

operations and transport.

The workers were protesting new IMF-imposed austerity measures which include an 8% wage cut, the layoff of 2,000 public sector workers, and price hikes.

The workers also demanded that Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford must go. ■

Workers shake up stock exchange in Brazil

The Rio de Janeiro stock exchange was the scene of pitched battles between workers and police on October 24. Workers had come in to protest the bidding going on for the largest government-owned steel company which is being privatized. Six hundred police lobbed tear gas into the protesting crowds.

On November 28, thousands of homeless children took to the streets of Rio to condemn killings of street kids in that city. ■

Costa Rican students in struggle

Students have been on strike in Costa Rica since October 2 against privatization of four state universities. On October 17, forty thousand of them marched in San Jose. For the moment, the government has backed off. ■