



No to Bush, Clinton and Perot!

As the election campaign enters its final month, the economic news for the working masses has only gotten worse.

Wages are dropping, unemployment is climbing, more people are losing their health insurance, poverty is soaring, and the economic crisis drags on.

And to make matters worse, none of the presidential candidates have the slightest idea of how to change the situation.

Clinton's "trickle down"

Oh sure, Clinton claims he'll get the

Change the system!

economy moving. And that is supposed to eventually create jobs, provide universal health care, and other good things.

But his actual economic program is remarkably similar to that of Bush — more "trickle down" nonsense based on slashing social programs to provide incentives to the filthy rich capitalists. (See article on page 6.)

And that's just more of what got us

into this mess in the first place.

Perot's budget balancing — on the backs of the workers

Meanwhile, the independent billionaire Ross Perot promises he'll balance the budget. But not with his own money, oh no! His combination of budget cuts and tax increases would hit the working masses especially hard.

Whether his plan would eventually lead to a balanced budget or simply throw the economy into even deeper crisis is anybody's guess. But in any event, Perot's plan would not provide jobs, or raise pay, or provide health care or other programs needed by the working people. Rather, Perot would continue the Reaganite trends from the 1980's in which the richest 1% of families amassed as much wealth as the bottom 90%. (See article on page 6.)

Time for a change

Now everybody says "it's time for a change." But how is change to be brought about? To really improve the situation for the working masses and deal with the economic crisis it is essential to recognize two things.

The first is that our society is split up into classes, and it is the struggle between these classes which is the actual basis for change. Bush, and Reagan before him, have headed up a decade of class war by the capitalists against the workers and poor. To change the situation, the masses must build up the class struggle against them. Not Clinton's call for "equal sacrifice," nor Perot's chant of "share the burden." No, to change the situation, we must fight against the capitalists and make them pay for the crisis.

Secondly, to eliminate class divisions it is necessary to put an end to the system that produces them — capitalism. Today capitalism has grown so rotten that it is impoverishing the very workers who have created the capitalists' profits. It's time to advance to a new system, one where the workers run things for their own benefit, one that eliminates all class divisions and exploitation.

It's time for a change. But it won't come from the likes of Bush or Clinton or Perot. We must look beyond these candidates and their election circus. We must look instead toward building up a movement for change, a movement based on the workers and oppressed, a movement to make the capitalists pay for the crisis!

Anger grows as California bashes the people

California went two months without a budget this summer as Republican Governor Pete Wilson and the Democratic-controlled state legislature haggled. They were agreed on gutting social programs and the educational system, but not on how much. In early September an agreement was reached. The Democrats declared that they were voting for the drastic cuts proposed by Wilson instead of implementing their own program of cuts.

Brutal cuts

The result is a bipartisan declaration of open season on the workers, the poor and students.

The \$57.6 billion budget will cut \$6 billion from state funding for health and welfare, education, and aid to local governments. *Business Week* magazine also estimates that it will eliminate 50,000 public employee jobs. Other sources report a 5.8% cut in welfare payments, which are frozen for four years. (*Washington Post Weekly Edition*, September 7-13)

The budget also wreaks havoc with the California college system. For example, community college fees are to double. It is estimated this will pressure up to 200,000 students to drop out. Drastic cuts are also being implemented in the state university system. It is said that many community college and university students will have to expect to spend five years of study to accomplish a four-year program, because the classes they need to graduate will be full or not offered when they need them. This is a tremendous added burden for working class students.

Meanwhile the public schools have to figure out how to run on the same per-pupil allocation as last year in the face of rising costs. And this allocation includes a billion dollar "loan" from the state, which will have to be paid back out of future school budgets.



Belmont High School students in Los Angeles walk out against cutbacks.

The state budget also rips into medical care, libraries and parks.

Protests in Los Angeles

As a result of this budget, many working class people are seeing their life plans go up in smoke and others are facing painful squeezes. People are starting to denounce the cutbacks.

On September 7, teachers in Los Angeles came out against the local school board's attempts to slash their pay from 6% to 16%. This is part of \$400 million in cuts in store for the school district. The teachers held a motorcade of over 4,000 cars and tied up traffic near Los Angeles International Airport.

Two days later, 400 students at Manual Arts High walked out of school and held a picket and rally. Several students helped distribute an MLP leaflet on the budget cuts and joined in shouting slogans. About 30 teachers and 50 parents also participated in the picket.

The same day, several hundred Belmont High students walked out and marched 15 blocks to the steps of City Hall. They rallied there and shouted anti-cutback slogans. As well, 200 Grant High students ditched their classes to hold a campus protest. Even junior high students took up the struggle as 100 held a lunch-time rally in Granada Hills.

On September 15th, 800 county workers picketed a meeting of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. They

denounced planned layoffs and the curtailment of services. The demonstrators chanted slogans including some suggested by MLP supporters such as "The money is there if we make the rich pay!" and "Tax the rich!"

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EUROPE IN TURMOIL

Europe is often in the news these days. The war in the former Yugoslavia is a focus of world attention. Reports of economic crisis and political turmoil from Western Europe have also become nearly a daily affair. In this issue of the *Workers' Advocate* we focus on several questions surrounding the crisis of capitalism across the Atlantic. (See pages 8-10)

Neo-nazi attacks on refugees are continuing in Germany nearly every week. These ugly incidents bring out that for all the talk of the advanced civilization in Europe, capitalist society there, not unlike U.S. society, remains rife with racist bigotry and violence against minorities. But the racist revival isn't all that's taking place in Germany. There are also anti-racists organizing and fighting against the fascists.

There have been nazis on the fringe of German politics for years. Why are they having some success in drawing in

disaffected youth? One big factor is the economic devastation which has gripped eastern Germany since West German capitalism swallowed up the former East German state-capitalist society.

Economic crisis is however much broader than the former East Bloc territories. A few years ago, the defenders of capitalism sang the glories of the free market. But in the lands of the free market, we see unemployment rising, plants shutting down, cutbacks in social benefits increasing. A number of economies, including Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Greece are in depression conditions. Inside, we cover a report on how the economic crisis is leading to the scaling back of the welfare state in Sweden.

The attacks on the conditions of the workers are not being taken passively. Greece has been engulfed by a strike wave, and Italian workers are taking to

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Malcolm X

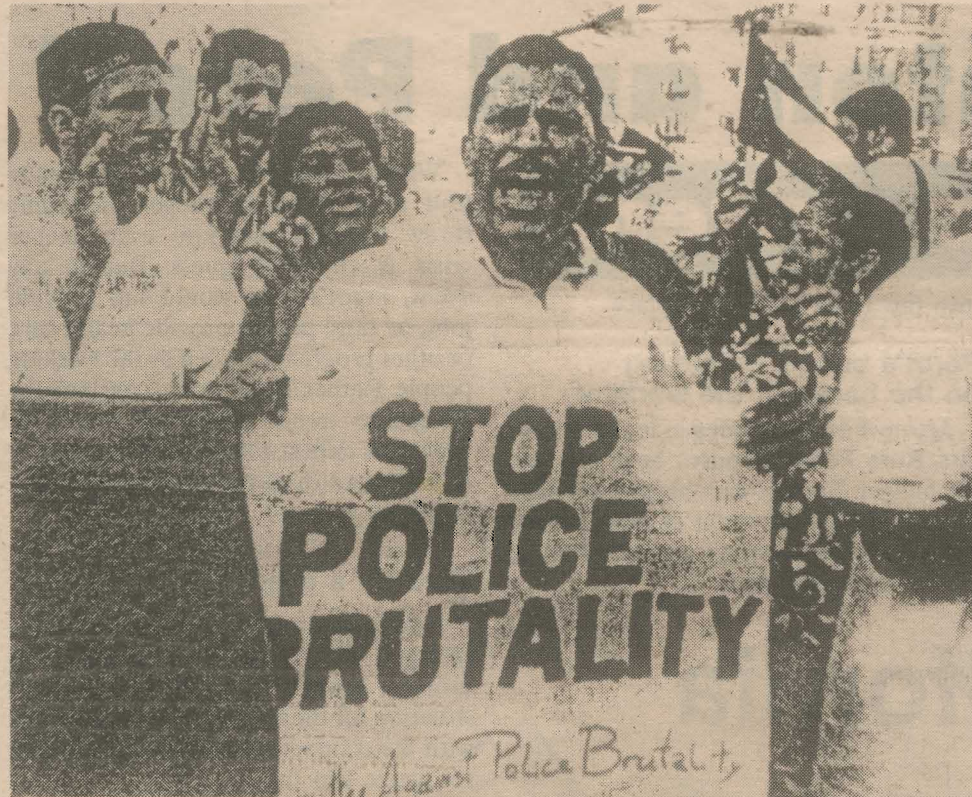
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What's behind Somalia famine?

see back page

DOWN WITH RACISM!

Killer cop left scott free in New York City



New Yorkers denounce latest acquittal of killer cops.

A Manhattan Grand Jury has refused to indict police murderer Michael O'Keefe. O'Keefe is the cop who gunned down Jose Garcia in cold blood, sparking four days of street fighting against the police early in July in Washington Heights. This verdict is just one more example that the justice system in the U.S. is rotten to the core. There is no justice for the poor and the working class.

The exoneration of O'Keefe is not an isolated case. Police brutality against the poor is widespread, from New York to Los Angeles, from Teaneck to Brooklyn. It is encouraged by the police departments, and it is condoned and covered up by district attorneys, city governments and federal institutions. We must go out

into the streets and build a militant mass movement to fight back.

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

For years the police have been conducting a war on the mostly Dominican community of Washington Heights in the name of the "war on drugs." The murder of Jose Garcia was "business as usual" for the 34th precinct cops, who behave like an army of occupation in the community. O'Keefe himself was part of the notorious "Loco Motion" patrol, accused by residents of drug trading, and assaults, theft and savage beatings against the local youth.

For the police, anybody standing at the doorsteps of a residential building is

a lookout, and any youth on a street corner is a drug dealer. This supposedly gives the cops the right to terrorize the community with arbitrary searches, beatings and break-ins of family apartments.

The government has no solutions to the problems of the workers and poor

More police, more force and more jails have not solved the drug problem. Mayor Dinkins expanded the police force, he made the "war on drugs" a centerpiece of his administration's policy. But the social issues underlying the drugs are not being addressed.

Poverty is on the rise. The conditions of life for the people in the inner cities are deplorable. The youth, especially the minority youth, have very little hope ahead of them.

And while the working and poor people are persecuted, the big-time criminals are hardly ever brought to justice. Oliver North organized flights to ferry drugs for the Medellin Cartel in exchange for weapons' deliveries to the Nicaraguan contras, and he is a "hero." The S&L bankers, Wall Street junk bond kings, and other rich sharks have made off with billions of other people's money, but they are given slaps on the wrist, if anything at all. Employers can kill and maim workers on the job, but they are never put in jail.

The crusade against crime is a farce! The real aim of the "war on drugs" is to terrorize the disenfranchised poor and prevent them from rising against the wealthy capitalists.

(Excerpted from Sept. 9 "New York Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-New York.)

Protest hits racist support for cops who beat Rodney King

Nearly 400 anti-racist activists marched to the Simi Valley courthouse on September 12 to confront a racist rally. Only a handful of members of Richard Barrett's racist "Nationalist Movement" showed up for a rally to support the L.A. cops who brutally beat Rodney King. But they had some 150 cops protect them. And a number of confrontations broke out with the police.

About 200 people held a rally and then marched to the courthouse. A contingent of the Marxist-Leninist Party took part leading slogans among a couple of dozen people against the racists and the police.

There were some 150 activists already waiting at the courthouse to confront the

racists. And demonstrators joined forces in a militant picket. After about a half an hour, some reformist leaders pulled over 100 people back to the park. This split the protest right before Barrett came out with his police guards.

The remaining demonstrators rallied local youth to join the protest. Anger mounted. Some protesters began to pelt the cops with rocks. And 250 leaflets by MLP supporters exposing the racist LA Sheriff's gangs were grabbed up. When the cops picked off and began arresting militants, groups of 20-30 protesters surrounded them and tried to free the angry youngsters. The demonstrators eventually had to back off when police reinforcements arrived.



Simi Valley cops attack anti-racist picket.

100 rally in Detroit for prisoners' rights

On September 26, one hundred activists, friends and families of Michigan prison inmates rallied in Detroit to denounce stepped-up repression in the nation's mushrooming prison system.

Speakers pointed out that prisons are among the biggest growth industries in the U.S. This country already has the highest rate of incarceration per capita in the world. Its rate of imprisonment of black people is even higher than in South Africa! The federal prison population alone is expanding by 550 inmates per month. The facade of rehabilitation is being dropped from the prison scene with education being cut back and coun-

seling unavailable for those in need. And in every state and at the federal level politicians are passing new laws restoring or expanding the death penalty, mandating longer sentences, restricting the use of parole and financing more sophisticated hi-tech prisons.

Petitions were circulated at the rally opposing the state's plans to sentence juveniles as young as age 13 to adult prisons, condemning the seven-year-long lockdown still underway at the U.S. penitentiary in Marion, Illinois, and for repealing the mandatory sentence of life without parole for some cases of drug possession.

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Remembering Malcolm X

This November, film director Spike Lee is due to release his film on the life of Malcolm X. Undoubtedly, this film will provoke a great deal of discussion and controversy about Malcolm X. As a contribution to that discussion, we present our own point of view by reprinting excerpts from the article "Remembering Malcolm X," which we published in our June 1, 1990 issue.

Malcolm X's words are finding new ears to listen, new voices to spread his message. Another generation is coming up. Young people who are fed up with the racist onslaught of the government. Young people who are tired of the lollygagging of the "respectable" leaders. Young people who are looking back to find leaders who speak their language, who stand for an uncompromising struggle against racism. They are looking back to Malcolm X.

Malcolm X himself represented just such a new generation. The civil rights movement had brought the black masses into the streets to march and to pray and to wait. But by the late 1950's a broad section of them had had enough of praying and waiting. They were moving past the liberals, who promised freedom, but always tomorrow. They were moving past the respectable black leaders, who called tokenism "progress" while the masses continued to suffer. They were moving past "turn-the-other-cheek" sermons, and taking up active resistance to racist abuse. They wanted change, and they wanted it now. They were moving towards revolution.

The significance of Malcolm X was not that he was a brilliant theoretician or some visionary finding new and, as yet, unheard of truths. Rather, his importance was that he was completely bound up with this rising section of the black masses, was a part of their seething movement forward. Malcolm X heard the cries of the masses and provided an eloquent voice to their determined strivings.

Tearing the mask off the liberal Democrats

The masses were coming to doubt the good intentions of the liberal Democrats. Yet Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson and the other civil rights leaders continued to preach reliance on the liberal Democrats. Malcolm X, on the other hand, exposed them.

Analyzing events as they happened, he tore the mask off what he aptly described as the "giant political con game." He showed that, "The job of the Northern Democrat is to make the Negro think that he is our friend. He is always smiling and wagging his tail and telling us how much he can do for us if we vote for him. But at the same time that he's out in front telling us what he's going to do, behind the door he's in cahoots with the Southern Democrat setting up the machinery to make sure he'll never have to keep his promise."

And he drew the only sensible conclusion, that the masses had to organize themselves independently. "We won't organize any black man to be Democrat or Republican," Malcolm declared, "because both of them have sold us out...Both parties are racist...."

Down with accommodation and tokenism

The masses were also becoming skeptical of the "respectable" African-American leaders. Malcolm X articulated these feelings in sharp and plain language.

Calling them Uncle Toms, Malcolm emphasized, "The only time you see them is when the people are exploding.

Then the leaders are shot into the situation and told to control things. You can't show me a leader that has set off an explosion."

And he showed that giving a few black politicians positions in the government or seats on the corporate boards was just tokenism which did not solve the problems of the masses.

"They only gave us tokenism. Tokenism benefits only the few," Malcolm X declared. "The masses of our people still have bad housing, bad schooling and inferior jobs, jobs that don't compensate with sufficient salaries for them to carry on their life in this world. So that the

"We won't organize any black man to be Democrat or Republican, because both of them have sold us out....Both parties are racist...."
MALCOLM X

problem for the masses has gone absolutely unsolved. The only one for whom it has been solved are people like Whitney Young, who is supposed to be placed in the cabinet, so the rumor says.... So, it is very important for you and me to see that our problem has to have a solution that will benefit the masses, not the upper class — so-called upper class."

Organize for mass struggle

The Afro-American masses were increasingly turning to active, mass resistance to racism. And Malcolm X supported them. And he sharply criticized both the turn-the-other-cheek pacifism of Martin Luther King and the abstention from the mass movement practiced by Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam.

"It is criminal," he said, "to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks...The time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked."

And, after splitting with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm warned the racists "I am no longer held in check from fighting white supremacists by Elijah Muhammad's separatist Black Muslim movement...you and your Ku Klux Klan friends will be met with maximum physical retaliation from those of us who are not handcuffed by the disarming philosophy of nonviolence, and who believe in asserting our right of self-defense — by any means necessary."

An indictment of the system

As the anger and impatience of the

masses grew, they began to move spontaneously towards revolutionary conclusions. Malcolm X also gave expression to this striving. He too felt that the mass struggle was not simply to stop this or that abuse. It had to be inspired by opposition to the entire system.

"...people will realize," he argued, "that it's impossible for a chicken to produce a duck egg — even though they both belong to the same family of fowl. A chicken just doesn't have it within its system to produce a duck egg. It can't do it. It can only produce according to what that particular system was constructed to produce. The system in this country

cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this economic system, this political system, this social system, this system, period."

And he drew the conclusion, "Revolutions are never based upon that which is begging a corrupt society or a corrupt system to accept us into it. Revolutions overturn systems. And there is no system on this earth which has proven itself more corrupt, more criminal, than this system that in 1964 still colonizes 22 million African-Americans, still enslaves 22 million Afro-Americans."

Part of the international revolution

And Malcolm X saw this struggle as part of a world struggle. He opposed the narrow views of the "respectable" leaders

Malcolm X was not one of those leaders who hand out their "truths" like so much popcorn to a hungry mob. Above all, he argued and cajoled people to look into things, to study, to seek out new, revolutionary ideas, and to think for themselves.

who claimed black people should first "clean up their own back yard" and not look to and support the liberation struggles abroad.

Malcolm X was one of the first to not only condemn U.S. aggression against Vietnam, but to also support the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people. He also supported other liberation struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Think for yourself

Malcolm X was not one of those pompous leaders who hand out their "truths" like so much popcorn to a hungry mob. Above all, he argued and cajoled people to look into things, to study things, to seek out new, revolutionary ideas, and to think for themselves. Where he found himself mistaken, as with his early belief in the Black Muslims, he was not afraid to criticize the old and useless notions, and to grab hold of the new ideas that offered insight for advancing the struggle of the masses.

When we look back to Malcolm X today, we must also follow this example. There is much to learn from Malcolm X. But it also has to be seen that the world has moved on. And if we are to truly fight racism we must take what Malcolm X had to offer and ourselves move on to see how things have developed and to get a deeper understanding of what must be done in the movement today.

For example, Malcolm's viewpoint was inspired by the national liberation struggles in Africa and in Asia and Latin America. But today, most of those struggles have run their course. They freed the countries of colonialism. And then opened up a new struggle, a class struggle of the workers and oppressed against their own domestic exploiters (who are backed up by the imperialists). Petty-bourgeois leaders, who may have once been revolutionary, have become bourgeois, have become the new exploiters, sitting on the backs of the masses. And for the masses to liberate themselves, they must break free from the capitalist framework, turn to a socialist perspective, and take up the weapon of class struggle. Malcolm X did not see this. But we must.

Or take the situation in the United

States. Malcolm X unflinchingly condemned the tokenism of the "respectable" black leaders. But he had not seen where that tokenism would lead and hesitated to condemn the tokenist leaders as a rising bourgeois class.

But the tokenism of the 1960's has led to the burgeoning black upper class of today. This is a class that has found seats

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Defend women's rights!

Abortion rights battle at Chicago's Cook Co. Hospital

Abortions resumed at Cook County Hospital (CCH) in Chicago on September 16. For 12 years, CCH had banned abortion, so that while abortion was legal in Illinois, it was denied to most poverty-stricken women in Chicago. Now that the ban is lifted, CCH is one of the less than 20 hospitals in the whole country that perform government-funded abortions.

Meanwhile, for several months anti-abortion forces led by Joe Scheidler have sought to harass the hospital. On September 16, the day abortions resumed, 100 "pro-life" crusaders demonstrated at the hospital, but they were confronted by 20 pro-choice activists. The police, supposedly on hand to keep the hospital open, proved more interested in holding back the pro-choice protesters. Two activists were arrested just for putting their banner near some of the anti-abortion forces.

The next day about 200 supporters of abortion rights rallied at the hospital while the anti-abortion crew could only muster 15 people. Pro-choice activists gave spirited speeches. About 50 hospital employees came out to join the rally. The hospital staff were especially angry about the anti-abortion movement's threats to picket the houses of doctors performing abortions. During the week, some 2,500 hospital employees made their feelings known by wearing buttons

that proudly proclaimed they are part of a staff providing abortion services at CCH.

Pro-choice pickets were held each day for the remainder of the week. But the anti-abortion crusaders disappeared until Sunday, the 20th, when 200 anti-abortion zealots showed up. A small group of defenders of women's rights kept an eye on them. But, as during the week, the "pro-lifers" made no attempt to blockade the hospital. Meanwhile, 40 pro-choice militants turned the tables on Scheidler and picketed his house.

The decision to restore abortion services at CCH was taken by Richard Phelan, president of the Cook County Board. His executive order will allow some long-denied access to abortion for poor women in Chicago. But it left much to be desired. For one thing, Phelan has imposed restrictions on women seeking abortion that in some ways are stricter than the notorious Pennsylvania law recently upheld by the Supreme Court. Among other things, there is a three to five day waiting period, mandatory anti-abortion counseling and second trimester abortions are all but banned. Moreover, Phelan has not bothered to provide much funds to implement his order, instead demanding more work from the overburdened medical staff. ■

Family leave dies another death

Once again all the talk of the need to provide workers with family leave — for pregnancies, dealing with newborns and severe family illnesses — has produced a big, fat zero. In 1990 Bush vetoed a weak bill requiring some employers to grant unpaid leave. Congress couldn't override the veto. In 1991 Congress tried an even weaker bill, which was again vetoed. And this year, in September, Bush vetoed another watered-down version of the 1990 proposal. Again

Congress could not override it.

Bush's last-minute ploy

But there was a new step in the annual family leave dance. As Bush killed the bill, he came out with his own so-called family leave proposal. Bush has always said family leave is a good idea — so long as no employers were actually required to grant such leave.

His new proposal upholds this principle. No business would be required to grant family leave. But Bush would offer businesses with under 500 workers a tax write-off, if they granted their workers family leave of up to \$20 per day for up to 60 days of leave. So it turns out that Bush's family leave program is another tax break for employers.

Such a tax break is the worst possible way of encouraging family leave. It gives the worker no rights, but leaves her or him to the complete mercy of the employer. Furthermore, given Bush's budget plan, it would be financed by cutting money from other social programs.

But after all, this plan is just a last-minute political ploy to bolster Bush's faltering election campaign. After 12 years in the White House, as vice-president and then president, this is all Bush has come up with.

Congress offers some token aid

Bush's proposal is so pitiful that it is about the only thing that could make the Congressional bill look good, by contrast. Yes, Congress would require some employers to grant unpaid leave. But workers need paid leave or else many will be between a rock and hard place. They will be faced with going broke while tending babies or sick children, or working and letting the family

emergency take care of itself.

But the bill would not provide anything at all for the bulk of workers. It only applies to 5% of the work places because it exempts businesses with under 51 employees. It also exempts all part-time workers who don't get at least 25 hours of work per week, as well as the highest-paid 10% of an employer's work force. With all the restrictions, only about one in four workers are covered

and could take leave — if they could financially afford to do so.

Family values of the rich and famous

Bush and Congress are quick to proclaim their devotion to family values. But if helping the families of the workers and poor means spending anything, then they want nothing of it. ■

Acid and bullets — the tools of "right-to-life"

25 indignant supporters of women's rights picketed the home of Operation Rescue's Detroit-area leader Lynn Mills on October 3. This was a response to the vandalizing of 14 women's health clinics in Michigan beginning in mid-September. Some of these clinics provided abortion services, and some didn't, but they all were targets of "right-to-life" fanatics.

Under cover of darkness, the anti-abortion crusaders fired 15 bullets from a .44 magnum revolver into a Planned Parenthood clinic in Grand Rapids on the morning of September 30. On other mornings, they had injected butyric acid into this and 13 other women's health clinics by pumping it under doors or drilling holes through them. The acid has a terrible odor and can cause respiratory problems, skin irritations and nausea. It is so strong that, at one clinic, police and fire officials investigating the attack had to go to the hospital. There are costly cleanup and repair bills running into tens of thousands of dollars because carpets, tile, wallpaper, etc. have to be replaced.

The leaders of the anti-abortion movement in Michigan have tried to deny responsibility for the acid and bullets. What a crock! Who else is going to vandalize the clinics?

And indeed, OR leader Lynn Mills defends the acid attacks as not violent. And she gives advice on how to do it

better, saying "I don't know if this [pouring acid into clinics] is a good tactic or not.... But if pro-lifers were going to do it, we would do it right. These were done at the beginning of the week. We would have done it the day before procedures..." (Detroit Free Press, Sept. 25)

The picket on October 3 condemned the vandalism and the complicity of anti-abortion leaders like Mills. Demonstrators shouted "OR stinks" and "Stop the terrorist attacks on women." They vowed to "Defend the clinics." One woman sang a satirical song *Big cowards in the middle of the night stinking to high heaven*, parodying the acid-throwers, to the tune of *Dead skunk in the middle of the road*.

A national epidemic

Once again, around the country, there is increasing firebombing, vandalism, and shooting by the anti-abortion zealots. So far this year some 39 clinics have suffered chemical attacks as compared to three chemical attacks the year before. This is a sign of the real nature of the "right-to-life" movement. And it is a sign of its frustration at the failure of the big national actions they had boasted about. All across the country, defenders of women's rights have come to defend the clinics. ■

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he threw a piece of cement at the police, "You don't understand anything. Day after day, we can't even get enough to eat." Due to the slump in construction, the number of people applying for relief loans rose from a few dozen to nearly 1,000 a day at the end of September.

Nearly all of the 35,000 people living in this slum neighborhood are day laborers, who are at the bottom of the work force. Most work in construction. Workers like these are bearing the brunt of the current economic slowdown. Others facing hardship include temporary or part-time workers and foreign laborers.

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the streets nearly every day to protest austerity measures. We carry reports on these actions.

The economic crisis has also rocked the plans of the European capitalists to forge a closer political and monetary union. A year ago, the European establishment was boasting of their plans to strengthen their integration through the Maastricht Treaty. But these plans have been affected by a massive currency crisis that has played havoc with several of the continent's currencies. What was behind this crisis, and what impact is it having

The poor residents of Airin also took to the streets two years ago in a week of rioting. They protested after hearing about reports of police taking bribes from the gangsters who control the day job market.

The Japanese capitalists like to brag that their system of production builds loyalty among the workers to their corporation. But many workers, especially militants, are pushed out of corporate employment to a marginal existence as day laborers. And it has happened that, once fired from one corporation, a worker is blackballed from all others and must spend the rest of his life seeking temporary jobs. ■

on the Maastricht process? We analyze that in an article on page 8.

Capitalism has been around in Europe longer than anywhere else. It has developed huge productive and technical capacity. But it remains an unjust and cruel order. Those who own the means of production live off the labor of millions of workers, who are routinely consigned to the garbage can. But it is precisely those workers, who are themselves the product of capitalism, that can move society forward. For that, they have to take society out of the hands of the capitalists and shape a new world built on cooperation and based on meeting the needs of humanity. ■

Maternity leave in Europe vs. the U.S.

Below we compare government-mandated maternity leave in the 12 countries of the European Community to that in the U.S. Some of these countries are quite wealthy and others, such as Portugal, Spain and Greece, are much poorer.

The amount of leave given varies from three months to 28 weeks and even in Britain, 40 weeks. Usually between four and eight weeks, depending on the country, are before birth. In all countries, the leave is paid (except for the last 22 weeks in Britain). This ranges from 70% of salary to, in several countries, full pay. (In two countries, the leave may be paid at a fixed sum rather than a percentage of salary.)

In the United States, by contrast, the employer is not required to give any leave whatsoever. Just as the Bush ads say, the U.S. is indeed the world's superpower — it beats up on pregnant women and new mothers more than any other industrialized country. ■

California budget crisis:

Get organized against the rich and their politicians

The California workers and poor people are being devastated by the budget cuts. But for defense, they can only rely on themselves. Now is the time to see what the bourgeoisie and the politicians are like, and to organize an independent movement.

The Democrats as well as the Republicans are no friends of the people. They know how to give tax breaks to the rich. But when it comes to the needs of the working people, they cry "we must balance the budget and there is no money available."

But they always find the money to give the rich. The California crisis is due both to the economic crisis and the long years of cutting taxes on the rich. And even in the midst of this year's budget crisis, all the loopholes to the rich went untouched. Better that the schools should close, medical needs go untreated, and the poor should starve. Consider, for example, a few of the estimates put forward in this year's publications of the very moderate California Tax Reform Association:

There is a corporate change of ownership tax loophole, closing which would save California \$2 billion.

There are special tax loopholes for oil companies, closing which would save \$470 million.

If there were a withholding tax on independent contractors, the state would get \$300 million more.

The business person's deduction for meals, if limited, would save \$225 million.

But these loopholes are sacred to the politicians. They represent the rich; they would be thrown out of office by the capitalist political machines if they betrayed the rich; and they themselves benefit from the subsidies for the rich.

The top trade union leaders too

Meanwhile the pro-establishment trade union leaders have also tried to put a damper on the struggle of the public sector workers. For example, officials of the United Teachers of Los Angeles have campaigned during the past year that there should be more cuts for non-teaching staff, rather than opposing the cuts themselves.

In order to actually oppose the cuts, a number of UTLA members, other school employees, and parents joined into the School/Community Action Network (SCAN). They are interested in action themselves, but still considering what orientation to take. One of their recent leaflets exposed a letter of June 30 to State Senator Roberti signed by a UTLA lobbyist and officials from a number of unions. Jointly with the schools' boards and administrators, the latter accepted \$600 million in cuts being put forward at that time by the Democrats as an alleged alternative to Govern-

nor Wilson's proposals. The letter pointed out that "Education was already cut \$500 million last year, \$1.2 billion this year, and \$260 million in the May Revision for next year." But it would "reluctantly" accept another \$600 million. Mind you, beyond that, it "absolutely opposes" anything further.

To fight the cuts, the workers must take matters into their own hands. They must not accept the budgetary status quo insisted on by the rich and their political spokesmen, and accepted by the pro-capitalist union leaders. The rich, who take all the cream from the system, must be taxed to pay for state services and infrastructure. And the workers must get organized in their own right against all the forces that are pushing these cuts down upon them. ■



L.A. teacher during protest vs. cuts

CALIFORNIA Continued from front page

In the Bay Area

In the city of Oakland, Highland Hospital employees picketed on the night of September 21. They were protesting an austerity contract being offered to them and other county workers by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. The action shut down most hospital services.

The next day 95% of Highland workers participated in a sickout. Management claims they have no money because of the state budget crisis yet they spent big bucks flying in scab nurses from Los Angeles. 200 county welfare workers and some public health clinic workers joined the protest, calling in sick or leaving their jobs in mid-day.

There was also a protest at a Board of Supervisor's budget hearing. Another sickout is to take place, this time at Fairmont Hospital, on September 29.

College students rally

College students are also worried. On September 23rd, 2,000 San Francisco State University students held a rally to denounce higher fees, the cancellation of classes, and staff layoffs. Campus workers and teachers joined in, and many classes had to be canceled. The next day 300 students marched from campus to the state building in downtown San Francisco to denounce Governor Wilson and the cuts.

There were also actions at state university campuses in San Diego, Long Beach, Northridge, and Los Angeles. ■

MALCOLM Continued from page 3

in the capitalist corporate board rooms. This is a class that has become the mayors and police chiefs for major cities across the country. This is a class that finds its own greedy interests tied more to the dominant white ruling class than to the masses of black workers and poor. The tokenism of the 1960's has led to a situation where the respectable black leaders not only hold back the struggle, as Malcolm pointed out, but have become the managers, the overseers, the whip hands of oppression against the black masses.

And what this situation means is that the struggle against racism must be based on the workers and poor. It means that the anti-racist movement must condemn the black bourgeois politicians — and the capitalist system they are helping to protect — and build itself independently from them. It means that the entire working class — of every race and nationality — must be united and apply its strength to beat down the fortress of racism. Malcolm X did not see this. But we must.

Today there are many charlatans latching on to the memory of Malcolm X. Newspapers that once reviled him are now lauding him. Politicians who once denounced him are praising his name. African-American leaders who once opposed him are acting as if they were his true disciples. But they are not promoting Malcolm X to inspire the masses with his revolutionary spirit or to teach the masses to think for themselves. Rather, they are trying to tame him and preach accommodation with those he opposed.

They suggest, for example, that there was no real or major contradiction between Malcolm X and the "respectable" leaders like Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson. No, these were supposedly just two sides of the same coin

— Malcolm, the side of empty threats, which King could use to break into the racists' dining room with his more moderate, peaceful tactics.

All blacks were united then, they say. And all blacks — rich and poor, workers and capitalist — are united today. With these sermons they are trying to keep black workers separated from the workers of other nationalities (whether Latino, or white, or Korean). They are trying to bind the black workers to the interests of the black upper class and, through them, to the ruling class as a whole. They are putting up a roadblock to the struggle against racial oppression.

While some of the respectable black leaders call this sellout simply "black unity," there are others trying to dress it up in the militant colors of some of the former black nationalist leaders. Shame on them.

Malcolm X, in the name of black nationalism, advocated a revolutionary policy. And towards the end of his life he even began to doubt the black nationalist label saying, "I haven't been using the expression for several months" and that he was "hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the black people in this country." Yet today, as the class issues come increasingly to the fore, there are leaders trying to drag the movement backwards in the name of black nationalism. And they are using Malcolm X's name and reputation to do it.

Malcolm X, who defiantly stood against the racist system and all who sought accommodation with it, could hardly imagine what would be done to his name today. But we can see it. And it is up to us to defend him against the lies, to learn from his undaunted spirit, and to move forward to build up a truly revolutionary movement against racism.

(All statements from Malcolm X were quoted from "Malcolm X Speaks" and "By Any Means Necessary.") ■

Strikes and workplace news

Strike at Lordstown stamping plant delays closing

Nine assembly plants were closed, idling 45,000 auto workers, by the nine-day strike at one of GM's plant in Lordstown, Ohio. The workers struck against GM's plans to close the tool and die unit of the stamping plant and eliminate 240 jobs.

An agreement was reached in which GM put off the closing until January, 1994; agreed that 160 vacancies at the stamping plant will be filled by laidoff GM workers; and will create 140 new jobs by increasing production. The tool-and-die workers will have the opportunity of taking early retirement, transferring, or being retrained. ■

UAW leaders pit Lordstown workers against Mexican auto workers

The leaders of the United Auto Union like to claim that they are oh so concerned for the Mexican workers. Why, they oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement not out of chauvinist disdain for the Mexicans but, rather, in solidarity with them against super-exploitation by the auto monopolies.

But what the UAW hacks "solidarity" really amounts to was recently revealed in Lordstown, Ohio.

While the Lordstown stamping workers were out on strike, the UAW's leaders kept the Lordstown assembly plant workers on the job even though their local contract was also being negotiated. And while breaking the solidarity between the stamping and solidarity plants, they went on to stab the Mexican work-

ers in the back.

The UAW leaders signed an agreement which stipulates that if sales drop for Cavaliers and Sunbirds then workers at GM's plant in Ramos Arizpe, Mexico will be laid off before the workers at Lordstown assembly. It appears the UAW leaders plan to support the Mexican auto workers right out of their jobs.

Job security has never been won by joining with the capitalists' drive to pit one section of workers against another. No, workers in every plant — whether in the U.S. or Mexico — must stand together to fight against GM. ■

Contract ratified at Boeing

A new contract was passed October 2 covering 35,000 Boeing workers in the Seattle, Washington area and another 13,500 Boeing workers in Wichita, Portland and scattered Air Force bases.

Machinist union head Tom Baker praised the contract saying it "has many merits and will remain the best collective-bargaining agreement in the aerospace industry." But the Marxist-Leninist Party called on workers to fight for layoff protections and against Boeing's demands for major cuts in medical insurance and a two-tier system cutting \$1.67 an hour from the pay for new hires.

Many workers were relieved when Boeing backed off its demand to cut health insurance. But a number were still angry over other issues. The MLP distributed some 2,500 leaflets criticizing the contract at the union meeting in the Kingdome. About 29% of the workers voted against the contract. ■

Bush and Clinton's economic programs: More welfare for the rich

Bush and Clinton have been loudly condemning each other's economic programs. But a serious look shows that, in fact, they have many more similarities than they have differences.

They both plan more welfare for the corporations and the wealthy in the name of getting the economy going and creating jobs.

And they both plan more cuts in social programs and federal jobs in the name of balancing the budget.

But many capitalist economists point out that neither plan spends enough to jump-start the economy. Nor will they come close to balancing the budget. Instead, they simply continue to provide relief to the capitalists by shifting the burden of the economic crisis onto the backs of the working masses. Take a look at the major parts of their plans.

■ **Incentives for business:** Both Bush and Clinton propose a series of tax breaks and other incentives for business investment, enterprise zones, and research and development.

Bush has promised to put a third of any budget cuts he makes into tax breaks for business investment — by some estimates that could average out to anywhere from \$20 to \$36 billion a year.

Clinton has promised to put an average of about \$32.5 billion a year into new incentives for business investment in the cities and through a "Rebuild America Fund" for roads, rails, and communications infrastructure.

Typically, they both propose cutting the capital gains tax. Bush would cut it from the present 28% down to 15.4%. That would be an average tax savings of \$19,000 for the wealthy who make more than \$200,000 a year. Clinton would cut it further — down to 14% — but only for long-term investments in new companies.

■ **Keep up the S&L bailout:** The cost of bailing out the S&L's rose 264% since 1989 to about \$80 billion a year. Both Clinton and Bush propose to keep pumping in the money. Clinton promises to save some by eliminating waste from the agency doing the cleanup — but only about \$17 billion out of the total \$500 billion the bailout is expected to cost.

■ **Interest payments to the wealthy:** The interest payments on the federal debt have tripled since 1981, reaching \$268 billion a year in 1992. Neither Bush nor Clinton have considered cutting this plunder of the national treasury which goes primarily to the bankers and big financiers.

■ **Keep military spending high:** Military spending more than doubled since 1981 and now hovers around \$300 billion a year. Bush would cut only \$50 billion over five years (averaging \$10 billion a year). Clinton, on the other hand, would cut \$50 billion over four years (averaging \$12.5 billion a year). This would not begin to reverse the enormous buildup of the last decade.

■ **Cutting social programs and government jobs:** Since both Bush and Clinton plan to spend hundreds of billions to maintain the overbloated military and stimulate the banks, corporations, and the wealthy, then they claim they must cut back elsewhere — on the masses.

Bush says he would save at least \$293 billion over five years (an average of about \$59 billion a year) by placing a cap on entitlement programs that would lead to cuts in Medicare, food stamps and other social programs except for Social Security. Bush also calls for cutting a third of the staff from the executive branch and Congress.

Meanwhile, Clinton calls for cutting "waste" and "unnecessary" government programs to the tune of \$140 billion over four years (an average of \$35 billion a year). This is less than Bush. However,

it can be expected that Clinton will have to cut a good deal more than he admits to since his figures don't quite add up and are based on unrealistic expectations for growth in the economy. He has not specified which social programs he will cut. But he has admitted he plans to eliminate 100,000 federal jobs.

■ **A little job training:** While cutting many social programs, both Clinton and Bush call for increased job training to help the capitalists get the new skilled workers they need.

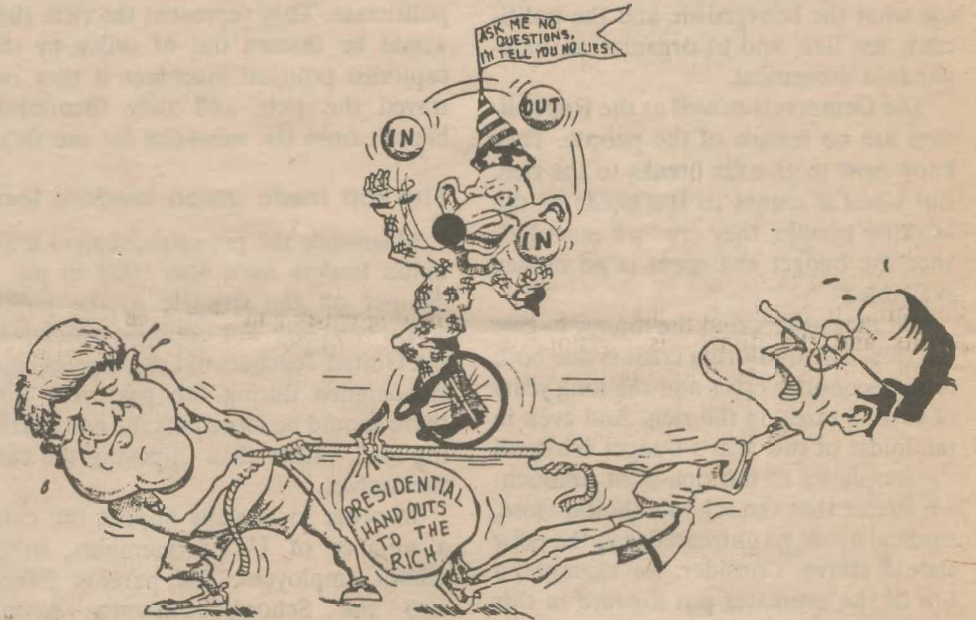
Bush says he would cut other social programs to raise about \$3.2 billion a year for job training.

Clinton would have larger employers increase job training by the equivalent of 1.5% of their payroll or pay that into a fund. Some estimate this to be a \$17 billion increase for job training. But others point out that in many cases the companies will just juggle their books so it appears they increased job training while not putting another cent into it.

■ **Clinton's tax increase:** One differ-

ence is that Bush calls for no new taxes while Clinton would raise taxes by an average of \$22.5 billion a year on the wealthy. However, the tax cuts that the

rich have gotten since 1977 amount to over \$80 billion a year. Clinton's income tax increase on the rich won't begin to make up the difference. ■



The Perot candidacy: Balancing the budget for the billionaires

Earlier this year Ross Perot jumped into the presidential election race. At that time his vague populism and undefined program provided a rallying point for a broad section of disgruntled voters who were fed up with both the Republicans and Democrats. But Perot gave up that mantle as he fled from the campaign when too many questions began to be asked.

Now Perot has re-entered the race, but his role has changed. He is now spearheading a campaign to balance the federal budget, no matter how bad the cuts and tax increases harm the masses.

A voice for the billionaires

In this campaign Perot is simply voicing the opinion of a section of business people who are worried that the deficit is hurting their profits by limiting investment and long-term growth in the U.S. and in the world economy.

On September 10, for example, the International Monetary Fund issued a statement urging the U.S. to slash its budget deficit. It suggested both cutting spending and also raising taxes on gasoline and energy generally.

A week later, the Council for Economic Development chastised Bush and Clinton for failing to seriously deal with the budget deficit. This group of business executives and economists, headed by BankAmerica's chairman, declared that slashing the deficit "should be the highest domestic economic priority." It called for a focus on cutting spending. But it also pointed out that "carefully designed tax increases that do not discourage private saving and investment will do less harm to the economy than persistent" deficits. (*New York Times*, Sept. 17) It suggested that increasing taxes on consumption would be best.

Make the working people pay

Perot has the same idea in mind. His five-year plan to balance the budget calls for a series of cuts and tax increases which particularly hurt the working people.

Perot would jack up gasoline taxes by 50 cents a gallon, tax employer-paid health insurance plans as income, increase Medicare premiums on all but the poor, and step up user fees for a whole slew of federal services. These are regressive tax hikes that hit the workers and

poor the hardest.

Perot also plans to cut a total of 15% of federal spending from programs other than debt costs, the military, and the mandatory entitlements (like Medicare, food stamps, and veterans' benefits). He would eliminate a number of programs completely, and slash the rest by 10%. Cutbacks would hit things like the cost-of-living increases for government retirees and nutrition programs for low-income families.

Meanwhile, he also calls for increasing spending for business investment. He wants the capital gains tax cut, more investment tax credits for businesses, and more research and development tax credits. Perot doesn't detail how much this would cost or where the money would come from.

Sharing the burden

While taking major hits on the workers and poor, Perot says he would "spread the burden" to everyone. His plan includes things like: raising the income tax rate for individuals making more than \$55,000 a year; and increasing taxes on Social Security benefits for retirees with incomes of more than \$25,000 a year individually.

These measures may spread the burden into the middle classes and beyond. But they don't begin to reverse the huge tax breaks that have been given to the very wealthy over the last 15 years. No, the billionaire Perot would never consider really making the rich pay to balance the budget.

MONEY Continued from page 7

Then politics in the ordinary sense of the word will come to an end. The stream of lies will finally end. One part of the population will no longer dominate another part, and there will no longer be a difference between what is told the public, and what is said in smoke-filled rooms. Decisions on economic matters will no longer be political decisions over who wins and who loses. Elections will be a real consultation among the people, not a circus of acrobatic lies.

But to reach this situation, to overthrow the money power, the workers

Make the rich pay for the budget deficit

Indeed, not only Perot, but Clinton and Bush and most of the news media as well like to blame the monstrous budget deficit on rising health care costs, or welfare, or some other program that benefits the masses. But just consider the fact that the huge rise in the budget deficit during the 1980's can be attributed to three major changes.

1) The military budget doubled costing an additional \$150 billion a year. Perot would only cut an average of about \$18 billion a year, only \$8 billion a year above the meager cuts proposed by Bush.

2) Income taxes were cut for the richest 1% of families since 1977 costing an additional \$81 billion a year. Perot's income tax hike doesn't target the richest and won't restore much of this.

3) The interest payments on the federal debt tripled since 1981, costing an additional \$190 billion a year. The bulk of that money goes to the banks and Wall Street financiers. But this category has been declared off limits by Perot.

Together these changes have added about \$421 billion to the budget each year. That's more than the current deficit, which won't quite reach \$400 billion this year. But Perot, and the other capitalist politicians too, won't seriously deal with them. Why, that would hurt the capitalist billionaires. And guarding the capitalists' profits is the only thing Perot is after in balancing the budget. It will take mass struggle by the workers and poor to make the rich pay for the budget crisis. ■

must first get organized. To be able to change society, they must not simply vote, but must learn to build up their own party. They must take part in politics right away — and not wait for the future society — by demonstrating, by building organization, by doing their own study of events to get a picture of the real way capitalist society runs. Then we will finally see the voice of the laboring majority. It will not only vote, but organize. ■

Gore: the environmental capitalist

Vice-Presidential candidate Al Gore fancies himself an environmental crusader. His recent book, *Earth in the Balance*, sets out his plan for coping with coming environmental catastrophes. He says a lot about environmental problems, which undoubtedly will make the book quite attractive for many readers.

But where does Gore think the problems come from? And what is his solution?

First of all, never does Gore blame the worsening environmental mess on the plunder of the planet by profit-hungry capitalists. Instead, he says "free market capitalist economics is arguably the most powerful tool ever used by civilization." For him, it is not the mad race for profits and the disastrous division of society into rich and poor that is at the root of the rape of nature.

So, in all 408 pages, not once does he discuss the class divisions in the human race. Oh no, according to Gore, we just live in a "dysfunctional civilization" where the masses of people are spiritually empty and are addicted to consuming the earth. The powerful and the powerless are equally to blame for pollution. Just give the powerful an economic incentive, and the marketplace will save the environment.

Gore wants to persuade the capitalist class that dealing with the environmental crisis, and providing proper government subsidies, is in their own self interest. Otherwise, he says, environmental destruction will lead to revolutions which will destroy the system of privilege and luxury for the ruling elite. For example, Gore warns that climate changes and crop failures helped provoke the French Revolution of 1789. He worries that revolutions will break out again today unless population growth is stopped, and mass migration from ecologically ruined areas curbed.

Gore, the pious

The cure Gore offers for healing spiritual emptiness is environmental Christianity. Gore is a born-again Baptist with a "close personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ." What we need, he says, is the merger of science and religion. The problem of humankind's "dysfunctional relationship with Mother

Earth" began with the 17th century enlightenment starting with Descartes, Newton and later Darwin and Marx. Today we must come back to God, according to the prophet Gore.

When Gore returns to earth he admits the deep lack of faith of people in politicians, government and business. He pleads with the capitalists to stop their speculation and merger mania. They must take a longer view, he says. They must get rid of short-sighted politicians like Bush. They need to think globally and for future generations.

But why will these money-grubbing capitalist sharks do this? Why, just guarantee them "large profits" of course! The dog-eat-dog marketplace is fine. We just have to redefine the gross national product and other economic indicators, Gore says. And then the race for profits will clean up the environment.

Gore calls for a government-sponsored Global Marshall Plan which will tackle one after another of the environmental problems with huge expenditures. He says this will provide "enormous profits" which will unleash the creative ingenuity of capitalism to develop earth-friendly technologies. And Gore closes his eyes to the vast forces of the marketplace directed against the environment.

And how is all this to be financed? Who is to pay for the tax incentives and subsidies of the corporations? Gore says little. The heavy gas tax he wants is not a good omen. And in the fine print, some other taxes and user fees, promoted by conservative politicians for quite other reasons, are presented by Gore as environmental panaceas.

Gore dangles before the reader images of technology transfer from the advanced countries to the developing countries. But he also demands more protection for ownership rights to new technology and patents, copyrights, etc. For him this is "no minor point." Yet it is one of the chief ways which the advanced countries want to make the rest of the world pay and pay.

One wonders whether all Gore's wonderful list of environmental protections will, in practice, simply turn into excuses for more subsidies for big business. We are all supposed to then stand back and watch the environmental benefits trickle down to us all just like eco-

nomie prosperity trickled down under Reagan and Bush.

Gore, the profane

Is this being too hard on Gore?

Well, how did Mr. Environment vote in the Senate? His track record was not voting to save the planet, but to save business interests. For example, Gore backed setting up the Clinch River Nuclear Breeder Reactor in his home state of Tennessee.

He also proposed moving the production of triggers for nuclear warheads from Rocky Flats, Colorado to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Rocky Flats, now closed down, is one of the most contaminated sites in the country. Its cleanup is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. Yet Gore wants to move this radioactive and highly toxic industry to his home state.

Gore also tried to amend the toxic superfund law to allow polluters to pay less for cleaning up their waste.

He voted against a measure to protect federal lands from being bought up

cheaply by mining companies and fast-buck artists like Neil Bush.

And Gore was a Persian Gulf War hawk with no reservations about the environmental destruction rained on Kuwait and Iraq.

Meanwhile Gore's running mate, Clinton, is known for his cozy relationship with the Arkansas timber and Tyson chicken industry polluters.

In short, Gore is just another silver-tongued political hypocrite.

The cure to pollution cannot come from the gods of profit. Gore has not the faintest clue that the real solution lies in organizing the masses to fight the capitalist class on environmental issues. And the full weight of science and technology will not go into environmental protection until the masses wield economic and political power in a new system. Either a socialist society based on cooperation and rational planning is established, or the capitalist marketplace will take its revenge on the poor and on the planet. ■

The rich get richer, poor people pay

The wealthiest

— The richest 1% of households have more wealth than the bottom 90%, by 1989. (Study by the Federal Reserve and Internal Revenue Service, cited in *New York Times*, April 20, 1992.)

Getting richer

— The incomes of the richest 1% of families increased by 63% in the 1980's. Meanwhile, the incomes of the bottom 60% of families actually fell in real terms, after adjusting for inflation. ("The state of working America," a study by Economic Policy Institute released September 6, 1992)

Executive pay soars

— The average pay for the chief executives at 257 of the largest U.S. corporations was \$2.56 million in 1991. That was 139 times the average U.S. paycheck. That is up from about 35 times the average workers' pay in 1973. (New statistics compiled by Graef S. Crystal, a business professor at the University of California at Berkeley, cited in *New York Times*, September 18, 1992)

Workers' pay plummets

— In 1991 the wages paid young male and female high school graduates were 26.5% and 15.4% lower respectively than what similar workers would have received in 1979. (From study by Economic Policy Institute, cited in the *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, September 14-20, 1992)

■ A 30-year-old male with a high school education earned \$3,500 less than a comparable 30-year-old did in 1979. (Study by Congress's Joint Economic Committee, cited in *New York Times*, September 7, 1992)

■ Low-skilled white men in their 20's saw their annual income fall by 14% after adjusting for inflation from 1973 to 1989. Annual earnings of a white male dropout in their 20's fell by 33%. (*Business Week*, May 18, 1992)

■ Meanwhile, black men in their 20's saw their earnings drop by 24% from 1973 to 1989. Earnings for a black male high school

dropout plummeted by 50%. (*Business Week*, May 18, 1992)

Growing poverty

— 35.7 million people were living in poverty in 1991, about 14.2% of the population. The number of poor people increased by 4.2 million in the last two years. This is the highest number of poor people since 1964. A family of four was classified as poor if it had a cash income of less than \$13,924 in 1991.

■ For black people the poverty rate rose to 32.7% in 1991.

■ For Latinos the poverty rate rose to 28.7% (Report by the Census Bureau, cited in *New York Times*, September 4, 1992)

Full-time workers in poverty

— 14.4 million full-time workers scrapped by on low wages below the poverty line for a family of four in 1990. That is up from 12.1% in 1979. (From "Workers with low earnings: 1964 to 1990," a report by the Census Bureau from March, 1992, cited in *New York Times*, May 12, 1992)

Growing hunger

— 30 million Americans suffer from hunger, an increase of 50% since 1985. (A study by the House Select Committee on Hunger, cited in the *AFL-CIO News*, September, 1992)

No health insurance

— 35.4 million people had no health insurance in 1991. (Report by Census Bureau, cited in the *New York Times*, September 4, 1992)

Unemployment and lost jobs

— In September there were a total of 17 million people who were either officially unemployed, reported not looking for work because they could find none, or working part-time but wanting full-time work. That is about 13% of the work force. Only about 4.8 million were receiving unemployment benefits. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, cited in *New York Times*, October 3, 1992)

■ Almost three million manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1979. (*Business Week*, May 18, 1992) ■

The best elections money can buy

The election campaign is in full swing. The voters are being flattered. They are told that the country depends on them. But full checkbooks count for more than votes.

You need money to run in an election. No one will even know your name, still less cast a ballot for you, unless the dollars flow like wine.

The average campaign for a seat in the U.S. Senate costs over \$3 million. In the last two Senate races, over \$380 million was spent by the winning and losing candidates.

A seat in the House is a real bargain by comparison, but it only lasts two years instead of six. It averages over a quarter of a million dollars, with \$480 million total in the last two races.

But for president? Four years ago the Bush and Dukakis campaigns spent over \$400 million.

There is money spent on polling research, on TV and radio and newspaper ads, on mailings.

Dollar democracy

Where does the money come from?

It comes mainly from the corporations

and the wealthy.

And what's the result? The savings and loans officials gave millions to their favorite candidates, and they got the Keating 5 group of senators to back them. The corporations and executives give millions, and they get one subsidy after another, along with labor laws that hamstring worker protest.

They get their money's worth.

Yes, it's a real democracy in this country. Only it's not a democracy for the people, but for dollars. Every dollar is equal. So the corporations and the rich, who have all the dollars, run all the government — local, state and federal.

Communism and politics

To have the working majority really direct affairs, it must not just vote. It must also be involved in running all the affairs of society on an everyday basis.

But for this to be true, the domination of money in the economy must be over. There must no longer be a division into those who only supervise, and those who only take orders.

Continued on previous page
See MONEY

European capitalism in turmoil

The economic crisis and European unity

The best laid plans of the politicians cannot escape the elemental forces of world capitalism. This is being dramatically revealed by the political turmoil in the European Community (EC). The plans for closer European union are being rocked by the havoc in the international currency markets.

The Maastricht Treaty

Last December, Europe's politicians, bureaucrats, and giant corporations were high on Europhoria. The EC leaders had just agreed to a plan for closer monetary and political union known as the Maastricht Treaty. At the center of this plan was the goal of a single European currency by the close of this decade.

Maastricht came as the product of decades of integration among Europe's monopolies and coherence among the leading political forces of capitalist Europe. Even before Maastricht, the EC had laid plans for a single European market by the end of 1992, to be achieved by removing most controls on the flow of capital, goods, and labor. Maastricht's ambition went beyond this. It represented a landmark decision towards a European federation, towards the launching of a European superpower.

The drive towards closer European union is being driven by the slowdown of European economic growth since the mid-70's and by the growing competition from the U.S., Japan and East Asia. Europe's main capitalists hope that a stronger union will position them better in the global market and bring them a new round of prosperity.

The Maastricht Treaty represented one face of the integrating tendency that is a feature of the world capitalist economy. It sought to subsume competition among the European national capitalisms in order to compete better with other centers of world economic power.

There were various ways in which Maastricht could have been undermined. But perhaps the key test was whether it could withstand a new recession. In the conditions of economic crisis, would the competition between the different European national capitals break out in force, or had European integration proceeded far enough to withstand that? This is the test the Maastricht Treaty faced this September.

The crisis

The recession found its political expression in three ways.

First, the European Monetary System (EMS) began falling apart because of a raging currency crisis. Several European currencies, most notably the British pound sterling, came under pressure to lower their value. The result was devaluation of most of these currencies and the weakening, if not near collapse, of the EMS. The EMS is a system of coordinated exchange rates which is the basis for the plans for a single currency.

The devaluation of the pound led to the conflict between Germany and Britain, already present during Maastricht, growing louder and more acrimonious.

Then came a very narrow yes vote in the French referendum on Maastricht. This showed deep apprehensions among the people of Europe's second largest country, despite the campaigning by the political establishment. This vote was complex, but a significant portion of the no vote was based on fears of German economic domination, less aggravated by the difficult economic conditions in Europe.

The currency crisis, in particular, deserves a closer examination.

The world currency market

Today there is a mammoth international currency market. This is what largely determines the relative exchange rate among the world's leading currencies, such as the dollar, yen, Deutsche mark, pound, franc, etc. The size of this market is estimated to encompass transactions of about one trillion dollars a day.

This market has evolved into it what it is today from the chaos following the 1971 collapse of the coordinated system of monetary rates set up after World War II (known as the Breton Woods system). Since that time, there have been various attempts to coordinate exchange rates among the world's large financial powers, but they have not had much stability.

The size of this market has mushroomed over the last decade. This has been due, among other things, to the growth of international trade, the dropping of controls on currency and other financial markets, and the development of communications and computer technology which now allow instantaneous global communication, the basis for a 24-hour currency market. The players in this market include national banks, other banks and financial institutions, as well as other speculators.

This market meets the needs of those who trade in goods and services worldwide, as well as those who send their capital across borders in search of the highest return. But its swings can play havoc with corporations and entire countries.

When exchange rates swing wildly, those who live by exporting goods and services can be hurt if the exchange rate goes against their favor. And if the market decides that a certain currency is weak, governments can be forced to devalue their currencies. And in defense of their currencies, national banks may also have to spend billions, many times fruitlessly. Meanwhile, somewhere along the way, some players take home with them huge profits from the speculation in world money.

This September, a number of European currencies came under pressure in the currency markets. It started with the Finnish and Swedish currencies, which are outside the EC, but soon extended to the British, Italian, Spanish, and even French currencies. The national banks spent billions of dollars to defend these currencies, but in most cases they did not succeed. The biggest impact was the lowering of the value of the British pound and the breakdown of the European Monetary System.

The havoc in currency in fact reflected the unevenness and conflicts among the European economies.

Behind Europe's currency crisis

The EMS was set up in 1979 as a system to stabilize EC currencies among one another. It is based essentially on pegging currencies to a fixed rate with the Deutsche mark, with only a small variation allowed. In other words, it is a system of coordination based on German financial dominance.

But this system's stability could not withstand the unevenness among the European economies. A number of countries, notably Britain, are in deep recession. The pound was under a lot of pressure on the world market because of loss of confidence in the British economy.

Add to that high interest rates in Germany. When Germany reaffirmed two years ago, the German government spent

billions of marks. It bought up the nearly worthless East German currency on a 1:1 rate. The main way Germany has been paying for this large amount of spending is by borrowing money from abroad, which it attracts with high interest rates. This is somewhat similar to how Reagan financed his early budget deficits through high interest rates.

The combination of weak economies across Europe and high German rates meant that any weaker currency (or any even perceived as weak) was bound to face pressure in international trading. And this is exactly what happened.

And once the economic unevenness had revealed itself in the system of coordination breaking down, the contradictions were bound to show up politically. And this has come up sharpest between Britain and Germany.

The British-German tiff

Both sides are hurling insults and accusations against one another. But besides the immediate economic conflicts, there is more going on.

The fact is that British capital was lukewarm about Maastricht. It sought and gained an opt-out clause on monetary union within that treaty. Indeed, even when Britain joined the EMS, it did so grudgingly because of the loss of economic prestige it implied. The greater fear is that with European monetary union, London, which is today the world's single largest currency trading center, will lose out to Frankfurt. And this would be a big blow to British capital, in which finance occupies a large place.

Strikes engulf Greece

For over a month now, workers in Greece have been massing in the streets to protest a government austerity drive.

The budget package includes price hikes on a range of consumer goods, reduced pensions for public sector workers, and the privatization of the Athens bus company. Gas prices are going up 30%, and the austerity measures are part of a plan aimed at cutting 60,000 jobs from the public sector over the next three years.

On August 27, a national strike hit utility companies, banks and transportation. Some 8,000 workers marched through Athens and delivered a petition to the Economy Ministry.

Nearly each day, workers from the Athens bus company march through the city to demand the reversal of the privatization order, which has resulted in the dismissal of 8,000 workers.

Utility workers' actions often shut off

British capital is caught in a tug of war. On one hand, it seeks to maintain its economic ties with North America. Politically London has been closest to the U.S., and that is also where the bulk of British capital is invested abroad. But on the other hand, British capital has been increasingly getting integrated into Europe. It trades more with the rest of the EC, and today European investment in Britain nearly matches North American.

This tug of war is yet to be settled.

Where now?

The recent turmoil has not scuttled the Maastricht plans, but they have set back the plans of the politicians and bureaucrats. They are most likely to force a modification of the plans.

One issue is what Britain will decide. It is possible that Britain will seek to postpone and weaken the plans for European union. But the recent weeks have also shown that most of the key EC countries may move ahead on their own. There is increasing talk of a "two speed Europe," one where some countries go ahead with monetary union while others lag behind but remain in the wider single market.

Officially the EC politicians scoff at such talk. But then the German leaders say things like, we don't want a two speed Europe but a Europe of "concentric circles." Go figure. The truth is, Maastricht already envisaged a two, or several, speed Europe. Only those countries which fit certain stringent conditions

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See MAASTRICHT

power during the day. Bank and post offices have also been shut down by strikes.

On September 9, police and striking workers clashed outside the parliament building before the government was to introduce its pension reforms law. Police fired tear gas against the workers.

September 24 saw yet another 24-hour national strike. It closed schools and courts and disrupted government offices and hospitals.

The budget cuts have been urged on Greece by the European Community and the International Monetary Fund. Greece is a member of the EC and in order to qualify for the planned monetary union it must bring down its budget deficit. The Greek capitalists expect their fortunes to improve through monetary union, but it is the workers who are having to pay a bitter price.



Greek construction workers rally against pension cuts.

European capitalism in turmoil

Italian workers protest cutbacks

In Italy, the government of Giuliano Amato has proposed a package of severe budget cuts.

These include a wage freeze for 3.5 million public sector workers, cuts in pension benefits, and the loss of entitlement to free outpatient care for some 20 million people.

Workers in Italy are furious.

Since the budget was outlined on September 17, wildcat strikes broke out in a number of industrial centers. And there are protest actions nearly every day.

100,000 demonstrated in Florence on Monday, September 23.

The next day, workers across the country began a series of rolling, regional four-hour general strikes. In what have been described as the biggest anti-government protests since the early 70's, about 100,000 workers marched through Milan and 50,000 rallied in Bologna.

On October 2, a strike paralyzed Rome, the capital. Schools and public offices were shut down, train and air travel disrupted, and bus and subway lines closed down for three hours. Tens of thousands marched. At one point, police attacked a section of militant workers with tear gas and nightsticks.

Militant workers vs. the union big shots

The Italian workers' struggle against the budget cuts is developing in the course of a sharp fight between rank-and-file militants and the trade union leaders. Militant workers are demanding a serious struggle against the cuts and not merely some tame protests which are meant to allow the workers to blow off some steam.



MAASTRICHT Continued from page 8

(like low deficits and low inflation) were to be first to be allowed into the single currency. And this is much the same talk one hears about two speed Europe today. The two speed Europe is based on the core alliance between Germany and France, and this alliance is still holding.

So, though the plans for Maastricht have been slowed down, the program is not yet undone. The question remains, of course, if the economic crisis places further strains, what will happen. Moreover, as popular votes and polls show mass apprehension, there are other ways the applicart can get upset.

In any case, before we end, it may be worthwhile to note that whether or not EC arrives at closer unity, the workers of Europe lose either way. The plans for closer integration mean the increased concentration of capital, and can be expected to foreshadow further attacks

The demand has been growing among the workers that the unions should declare a general strike. But the union leaders have refused, settling instead on four-hour regional strikes.

The workers' anger against the union bureaucrats has seen some sharp confrontations. At a mass meeting in Florence, Mr. Bruno Trentin, the general secretary of the CGIL, the largest trade union, was bombarded with coins and tomatoes by discontented workers. They denounced him as a traitor to the workers' movement. Trentin had signed an agreement with the government and employers abolishing cost-of-living adjustments to wages, and he has been supporting the government.

The Italian crisis

Italy's budget crisis is massive. The *Financial Times* described the cuts proposed by the government as "the biggest attack on health and social security spending since Italy's welfare state was set up after the war."

The country's budget deficit is projected this year to hit \$160 billion, amounting to more than 11% of Italy's gross domestic product. The capitalist government wants to make the workers pay for the state's financial bind.

Italy is already in the middle of a recession, with unemployment this year expected at 11.1%. A massive deficit reduction program will surely make things worse. But the levers of world

capitalism are putting huge pressure on the Italian government in this direction. Recently, international currency markets have pressed hard against the lira, the Italian currency, forcing an official lowering of its value. Meanwhile, the plans for European monetary union, which the Italian government supports, require that the country reduce its deficit and inflation by substantial levels.

Cutbacks and takeaways — this is what the capitalist economic system offers the Italian workers. Workers' struggles are essential to slow down the austerity drive. And to turn things around, the working people need an alternative to the profit system as a whole. ■

Sweden: welfare state in crisis

Sweden has for many years been held up as the best that capitalism can offer. The Swedish system offered a high standard of living, very low unemployment, and an extensive package of social benefits, including education and job training, child care, sick benefits and medical insurance, housing, and retirement.

But this model has faced strains for over a decade now. And in September, in the midst of Europe's currency crisis, the Swedish system received its biggest shakeup yet as the government and opposition agreed to a major package of austerity measures.

The cutbacks

Sweden is in the grip of recession. The official unemployment rate stands at 5.8%, a post-war high. The actual rate is said to be more like 8-10%. Though inflation is low, the budget deficit is high. And the country has been going through a financial crisis. Banks and insurance companies are in trouble.

In September, the Swedish currency, the krona, faced a run as international markets saw it as a weak currency. The Swedish government went to unprecedented levels to shore up the krona. Interest rates were temporarily hiked to an unbelievable 500%, despite the terrific credit squeeze it placed on a recession-plagued economy. The Swedish government plans to join the European Community in a few years, and it was determined to defend its currency to keep it in line with the EC's monetary system of coordinated exchange rates.

To renew the confidence of the world

on the livelihood of the European workers. But even without Maastricht, the forces of crisis, restructuring, and competition are forcing such a trend anyway.

The working class faces a challenge from the plans for the united Europe of the monopolies. It has to turn that challenge into an opportunity. The greater integration of economic and political life needs to be utilized to develop the Europe-wide solidarity and organization of the workers. A united Europe which could combine the productive power of Europe could be a force for tremendous progress, but that can only happen if it is the working class, not the exploiters, who are in power. Only a socialist union of Europe can meet the needs of the masses of working people and function as a positive force in changing the global balance of power which currently allows a small number of rich countries to exploit the poor billions of the less developed world. ■

currency markets, the Swedish government then decided to adopt a big austerity package. This was agreed to by the Conservative government and the opposition Social Democratic party.

Old-age pensions will now start at 66 instead of 65. They will not be increased.

A promised increase in child benefits will not take place.

Housing subsidies will be cut.

Workers' sick benefits are to be cut. There will be no payment for the first day and the amount paid for subsequent days will be reduced.

Health benefits and sickness insurance will eventually be paid for by employers and workers, not the state.

Taxes on gasoline are to go up 80 cents a gallon; the price is already over \$4 a gallon.

The glory days of the Swedish model are clearly past us.

What was the Swedish model?

For most of the time since the Swedish welfare state was first initiated in 1938, the country was ruled by the Social Democratic Workers Party. The Social Democrats said Sweden represented a model of socialism where there would be social justice, equality, and prosperity but without doing away with the profit system or the capitalist class.

Though they did bring in many reforms, Sweden was never socialist. The working class was not in power there. What Sweden represented was a capitalist welfare state, where the capitalists agreed to share their wealth in exchange for social peace. The Swedish welfare state was based on a social compact between the capitalists and the aristocracy of labor represented by the Social Democratic Workers Party and the union leaders. This system gained a certain stability because it was able to deliver a growing standard of living and wide social benefits to the working class as a whole.

Of course such a system could only remain stable under conditions of capitalist expansion, and Sweden's exceptionally favorable position. They avoided the destruction of World War II. And indeed, it was the capitalist boom after World War II which formed the economic underpinning of the welfare state. Sweden's capitalists were not only able to develop the productivity in the economy but their prosperity was also based on relatively sizable foreign markets.

Roots of the crisis

But Sweden's world markets have shrunk in recent decades in the face of increased worldwide competition and the

global slowdown. And productivity growth has tapered off.

Since Sweden remained capitalist, labor continued to remain enslaved to wages and powerless before the economy and the state. The social pact between the employers and union bureaucrats represented a paternalistic system which frowned on initiative, rebellion or dissent among the rank and file. For example, the unions do not permit the workers to strike. Such a system can only motivate workers to produce for so long, even with the promise of the best social benefits.

The way out?

Today the Swedish government seeks a way out of the crisis by cutting back on the welfare state and hoping that access to the European Community will rejuvenate foreign markets. But the future does not bode well for any magic solutions. The world economy is in recession and competition is fierce.

The Swedish capitalists and the politicians are telling the workers there that they still have it good. True enough, they still have social benefits that are better than most other countries. But the trend is towards the end of exceptional conditions for Sweden.

And with the cutback of the welfare state, the social pact is being undermined. Workers' struggles have grown in recent years and we can look forward to more.

The revival of the class struggle puts before the Swedish workers the task of forging a truly socialist alternative which will not only provide social benefits but also make them masters of the society as well. This is a task that they will have to take in step with the rest of the European workers, as Sweden gets integrated into Europe in the coming years. ■

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European capitalism in turmoil

Workers and youth say NO! to racism

The October 3-4 weekend, the second anniversary of German reunification, saw another round of mass protest against racism and the neo-Nazis.

Rightists staged some displays and vandalism, but they were far outnumbered by anti-racist rallies. Thousands of leftists demonstrated Saturday in support of foreign refugees and against the neo-Nazis. 10,000 marched in Frankfurt, 10,000 in Nuremburg, and 5,000 in Berlin. On Sunday, protesters at the site of a Nazi concentration camp denounced hatred of foreigners and anti-Semitism.

Besides the racist attacks against refugees, some of the weekend's protests also denounced the economic hardships facing workers. Banners were raised "Against the massive unemployment."

Anger at economic stagnation

Discontent with the economy is especially sharp in eastern Germany. Two years ago, in polls, 70% of residents of eastern Germany expressed confidence in the free market. Today that has fallen to 44%. (*Economist*, Sept. 12)

But workers in western Germany are also beginning to be affected by the stagnation gripping Western capitalism. Recently some auto manufacturers announced plans for large layoffs. And a new report on the European auto industry said that over the rest of the decade, 150,000 auto jobs will be cut. Many of these will be in Germany.

Fed up with racist attacks

Many workers in Germany are angry at the attacks on refugees and the resurgence of Nazi hate groups. Since the latest round of anti-foreigner violence erupted in Rostock in August, defense of refugee hostels has been organized in some areas. In mid-September 1,000 leftist youths defended hostels in Berlin at the time the German Peoples Union, a fascist organization, was holding a conference.

The Nazis continued their attacks on refugee hostels during September. Skinheads shouting Nazi slogans continue to attack hostels in eastern Germany, their activities tolerated or supported by local police.

Racist response of the ruling parties

German bourgeois politicians have waffled in denouncing the Nazi violence.

It took Chancellor Helmut Kohl until October 2 to deliver a strong statement denouncing the racist violence and xenophobia. And for the region around Rostock, the minister for social affairs, who is a Social Democrat named Hermann Heinemann, came out with a statement that the anti-foreigner violence is due in part to "wrongdoings" on the part of the foreigners.

Instead of firmly opposing the rightist violence, Germany's two major parties are edging to a consensus aimed against the refugees. Kohl's Christian Democrats are considering proposing to parliament an amendment to the German constitution, to restrict the right to political asylum. To get this passed they need the support of the major opposition party, the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats' party leader, Bjorn Engholm, has announced that he would support such an amendment.

Article 16 of the German constitution guarantees the right of asylum to victims of persecution. Refugees who apply for asylum are investigated, and while their case is being worked on they are housed in hostels or other segregated sites. But

at least they are accepted for the time period (sometimes one or two years) it takes to decide their case. If it is determined that they are economic refugees, not victims of persecution, then they are forced to leave. Kohl and Engholm want to change this process of investigation, to give the government more of a preemptive right to turn away refugees. Already they have begun deporting Gypsies under the excuse that they are economic refugees from Romania.

Workers need unity against race-baiting and violence

It's no wonder that the neo-Nazis feel emboldened to continue their attacks, given the stands of Germany's official political leaders. Both Christian Democrat and Social Democrat leaders are falling over themselves to blame Germany's social and economic problems on "the outsiders." At the same time they say other European nations — England, Italy, etc. — are to blame for not accepting more refugees. But this is just another twist of the same chauvinism.

The fact is, anti-foreigner hatred is a traditional ploy of the capitalists to try to divert the workers' attention away from the social and economic decay of capitalism. Its aim is to get the workers fighting one another instead of uniting against their exploiters. This whole debate about Article 16 of the constitution is meant to do just that, to get workers embroiled in arguments about



20,000 demonstrated in Rostock, Germany against neo-nazi attacks, Aug. 29.

which refugees and how many are acceptable.

Every day the capitalists themselves are pushing billions of dollars worth of capital back and forth across national boundaries — in trade, investment, currency transactions, stock speculations, and so forth. All this is considered normal and healthy. But let a few human beings cross the border, and all hell breaks loose.

The capitalists find race-baiting a convenient tool because it disrupts the potential for unity among the working

class. An all-sided, united struggle of the workers against capital would become a powerful force against the exploitation system.

This is why the establishment in Germany waffles about denouncing the anti-foreigner violence and instead gives top priority to targeting the refugees themselves. For their part the workers need to fight for the international unity of the working class, and to defend all refugees and minorities under attack. ■

1492-1992: The capitalists of today celebrate the holocaust in the Americas

500 years ago Christopher Columbus inaugurated regular contact between Europe and the Americas. This should have been a joyous occasion for the contact of two separated peoples.

Instead Columbus began one of the worst holocausts the world has ever seen. Entire civilizations in the Americas were decimated, and whoever survived was subjugated and enslaved and marginalized. Even today, 500 years later, the legacy of Columbus survives in the continuing discrimination against and oppression of the indigenous peoples.

Contact between Europe and the Americas was a major turning point for world history. But at what a cost!

This was because Columbus sailed on behalf of a class society, divided into rich and poor. Moreover, Columbus sailed at a time when market forces and capitalists were beginning to hold sway. The pursuit of profit, of gold and silver to turn into capital, and of colonial glories, turned men into beasts, ready to prey on their fellow men and women.

500 years later, the capitalists of today are still celebrating this holocaust. And why not? The capitalists of today held on to colonies until recently, and only surrendered them when millions of people rose up throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. The capitalists of today are still drenched in racism and national quarrels. They still drain wealth from developing countries to richer ones, and they still preside over societies split between rich and poor.

What excuses haven't they used to justify Columbus!

They say, so what if Columbus and those who followed enslaved whole civilizations. Didn't some of these civilizations have slaves themselves?

This is like justifying Nazi death camps because anti-semitism already existed

before Hitler took power.

Why, it is said, so what if nine-tenths of the people were killed off. Much of it was by disease. And the anniversary of this is celebrated? Why not also set up special days of world rejoicing for cancer, Alzheimer's, and the black plague that killed one third of Europe? Besides, the conquerors didn't try to stop the epidemics, but used them to subjugate the Americas, and sometimes spread them deliberately.

But slavery and mass murder were the magic of the marketplace. As Karl Marx said, referring to the European conquest of the Americas and other colonies, "The veiled slavery of the wage-earners in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world. ... If money...comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek, capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." (*Capital*, Vol. I, at the conclusion of Ch.

31, "Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist")

The voyage of Columbus, and its results, deserve serious attention. Why did such an important event have such frightful consequences? What kind of society generates such crimes, and what kind of society would celebrate them?

It is a society divided into the privileged and the oppressed. It is a society driven by the blind laws of profit, of greed, of benefiting from the misfortune of others.

It is time to consider whether the time has come when humankind can dispense with such societies. Have not large-scale production, modern science and technique, and the existence of a disciplined working class made such societies obsolete? Is it not time to overthrow those who would celebrate the enslavement of whole continents, and instead build societies based on production for the benefit of all? ■

5 protesters killed in the Dominican Republic:

Another crime in the name of Columbus

The Dominican people are furious against the 500th-anniversary celebrations for Christopher Columbus. The conservative, bourgeois government of Joaquin Balaguer has spent tens of millions of dollars to build a lighthouse to honor Columbus, while a deteriorating economy ravishes this already-poor country. The government prefers prestige projects to attract tourists than paying for health, education, or sanitation for the poor. The protesters condemn this waste of money, as well as Columbus's crime of enslaving and killing off the original inhabitants of the country who were Arawak Indians.

300 people marched to protest the upcoming celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus on Sunday, September 20. Rafael Efrain Ortiz, the head of the Dominican Committee of Human Rights, shouted "Columbus! You're not welcome here!" And a plainclothes policeman opened fire, shooting him in the head and killing him. Two others were also murdered by plainclothes cops, two more were wounded, and the demonstration was dispersed.

But protests continued in the following weeks. At least two more protesters have been killed, and six wounded. ■

75 years after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia

The collapse of revisionist tyranny will bring a new rise of communism

75 years ago the working class took power in Russia. The revolution of October 1917 began the most profound class struggle in history. The working class attempted to build a socialist order. And the United States, France, England, Japan and other capitalist powers blockaded Russia, intervened militarily, and sought to strangle the workers' power.

Today, the statues of Lenin are being pulled down, and the symbols of communism are being burned in Russia and throughout Eastern Europe. But in fact, Leninism and communism had been absent for decades from Russia. Only words and statues and lies had remained, which the new rulers used to reconcile the workers to their hard life and to bureaucratic tyranny.

What has fallen in Russia is not communism, but the state-capitalist tyranny that replaced communism long ago. What has fallen is revisionism, which revised the concepts of communism in order to paint tyranny as working class rule.

But the day the last statue is broken will be the first day leading to the rebirth of communism. On that day, the workers of the east will look around and start to wonder, what has Western-style capitalism brought us? Nationalist strife, mass misery, and a tyranny of the rich instead of the bureaucrats? And then the search for a new road of liberation will begin.

The tragedy

The press repeats over and over that 75 years of communism brought Russia to a sorry pass. Right-wing economists condemned Russia as communist for all this time, while reformist economists studied it as socialism. Only those who recognize that the Soviet Union has had nothing to do with socialism for decades can understand the real lessons of the Russian revolution.

The steps to socialism taken by the workers with such enthusiasm after 1917 had been interrupted after a few years. The workers had taken upon themselves the direction of the country; and they went as far as they could in first regulating, and then seeking to run by themselves, the economic enterprises. They used their political power to take steps to organize mass relief of the suffering, restructuring of the economy, elimination of the power of the bankers and big capitalists, the emancipation of women, the abolition of racist and national oppression, land reform, and the spread of education and enlightenment. The sweep and tempo of change was remarkable. But under the pressure of hardship, blockade, and the utterly backward economic and cultural situation inherited from tsarism, the workers could not actually build up the economy and run it in a centralized way.

After a while, instead of workers' socialism, a large state bureaucracy developed. Instead of widespread initiative, mass democracy, and the class dictatorship of the proletariat against the exploiters, a system of government dictatorship developed. Industry and, to a certain extent, agriculture were centralized, but under the rule of a new class of bureaucrats. The fruits of the economy went to this new class, and the communist party was turned into a party of these bureaucrats, not a party of the working class.

This was not communism, but capitalism. Not Western market capitalism nor Western "mixed economy", but a bureaucratic form of state capitalism.

The ruling party kept the name of

communism, but it denounced many of the principles of communism, and turned the rest into a cruel mockery. This was not the first time a working class party had been destroyed, while it kept its old name. This was not the first time that the working class theory was perverted into the view that socialism was simply a greater role for the state. And, as in the past, the only real Marxists were those who broke with such a parody of socialism and worked to build up new working class parties, really dedicated to the liberation of the working class.

What the revolution brought to the world

Why still hold to communism and Marxism? What positive legacy did the Bolshevik revolution bring to the working class?

This revolution woke as never before the aspiration of the workers to take power themselves, and set things right. It is communism that holds that the working people must not simply follow as sheep behind some benevolent leaders, but themselves transform the world. And much experience has been accumulated in this struggle.

The revolution showed the importance of revolutionary theory, and brought Marxism-Leninism around the world. It was the Leninist theory that showed the path of revolution to the Russian workers, and that showed workers around the world that they had to rescue Marxism from the shame that the reformist politicians had laid on it. Theoretical problems confronted the working class struggle at each step. From united front tactics to transition to socialism to relations among the different classes of toilers, Marxism-Leninism brought new consciousness to activists around the world and posed deeper theoretical questions.

It was communism that linked the working class of the more powerful countries with millions of workers, peasants, and enslaved people in the colonies and oppressed countries around the world. Communism was a vital part of the vast movement of national liberation around the world. And at a time when bourgeois politicians and European reformists sneered at the backwardness of colonial peoples, communism brought significant sections of the working class of the advanced countries to not just support, but champion the cause of the oppressed nations.

It was communism that inspired new waves of activists and workers to take up the task of building revolutionary parties. The workers and activists could not leave it to the big names and figures of the past. No, communism inspired them to take up themselves the task abandoned by the old ones with fame from past battles. Only this way could they build something truly independent, something that had the stamina and strength to stand up against the local ruling class and world capitalism.

It was communism that led to the most profound attempt yet at building a world party of the working class, the Third International, during its better years. Workers and parties of different countries cooperated in a far more profound way than ever before. Working people stretched their hands across borders of countries that had hated each other, across the border between metropolis and colony, even halfway around the world, not just in sentiment, but in joint struggle and organization.

Against revisionism

And this legacy can only be maintained by denouncing the sorry facade of communism that existed in the Soviet Union for decades. So long as Marxism and socialism remains associated with the travesty made of it by the state capitalist bureaucrats, it is useless and abhorrent. Only those who contrast the reality and doctrines of state capitalism with the real aspirations of the working class are doing true socialist work. The degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union called forth the need to fight revisionism.

Socialism is not a cut-and-dried doctrine, a completed blueprint of the future which only awaits those who wish to worship it and mechanically follow each line of the plan. It is a new system of production and life that will be in accord with modern economic conditions. And the working class has gradually taken up more profound ideas of how society should be run, and posed deeper questions about what revolution should bring.

And so, socialism has repeatedly gone through theoretical crises, and overcome them by posing more profound questions about economics and politics. Marx and Engels helped bring socialism from the basis of moral speculations about what would be nice, to a doctrine based on the realities of economics and politics. After half a century of growth on this basis, socialism and Marxism went through a crisis at the time of World War I. Would socialism be reduced to simply glorifying the state sector of capitalist economies, or would it remain a revolutionary doctrine of liberation? This is what called forward the birth of communist parties.

And then again, with the degeneration of the Soviet Union, there was another crisis of socialism and Marxism. Would socialism and Leninism be identified with state-capitalist tyranny, or would it be a doctrine for exposing such tyranny? Would a theoretical struggle against revisionism purge Marxism of the corruption spread by the state-capitalist bureaucrats, or would it die? The former communist parties died, and cannot be brought back on the old basis. Until now, the anti-revisionist struggle has only gone so far. Now, with the collapse of the revisionist regimes around the world, the anti-revisionist task still remains before all those who would organize the working class for socialist liberation.

Our Party was born as part of the then, world movement of activists opposed to revisionism. And today, along with others, we are carrying through a detailed study of Soviet history as part of our work to help deal with the theoretical issues facing socialist work.

The old world triumphant, the old world decays

Meanwhile, if socialism faces theoretical crisis, Western capitalism faces overcoming the economic and political crises that it constantly gives rise to. After all, for decades and decades now, capitalism's only real theory has been the claim that it works, and that there is no alternative.

So today Western capitalism is boasting of its ongoing victory over Eastern-style state capitalism, which it calls communism. It is shouting in glee that it has won the Cold War, overthrown the old regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe, and taken part in the wave of privatization around the world, including China.

It has won. But what has victory brought to Eastern Europe and Russia? "Shock therapy," mass unemployment, and nationalist strife.

And what does the victorious world of the West look like? Economic restructuring and stagnation is threatening the jobs and livelihoods of millions of workers in the U.S. and elsewhere. Racism and bigotry are on the rise. And the less developed countries are being squeezed ever harder so that profits can continue to flow to the richer countries.

This is the old world, which even in victory can bring nothing but misery and new dangers. It can't overcome the division into rich and poor, because it lives on this division. And so long as this division exists, so long as the prosperity of the few is based on the misery of the many, the old world will continually give rise to new movements for liberation.

Build a new world!

Both in the former revisionist countries and in the West, all those among the working masses who desire change will be put to a test: will they be swept away by the doubt and vacillations inspired by the capitalist victory chants? By the harsh conditions and the isolation? Or will they find a way to work for the building of a new world, free of capitalist exploitation and the division between rich and poor? Few at present, will they nevertheless find a way to be linked to real life among the working masses, and to take part in answering the theoretical problems of our times? In brief: will they prove to be the last remnants of a dying phase of the movement, or will they be the harbingers of a new struggle for liberation, able to help the mass of workers, as they begin to question and ponder events, get a clearer picture of the meaning of world development?

For as long as capitalist exploitation remains, the red flag of communism will rise again as the workers struggle for a way out. Just as a forest fire is sometimes necessary to clear the way for a new growth of trees, so the destruction of the old working class movement — and of the sham that paraded as the working class movement but was just hollow revisionism — has more than once proved necessary to make way for a new and more profound movement of workers' struggle. The regrowth of the working class movement will take a lengthy period. The names and banners under which it will spring up anew may differ, but the content will eventually be a new communist movement of liberation. The present fire of destruction of the old movement will singe, and sting, and burn, but the future belongs to the revolutionary working class.

On the 75th anniversary of the October revolution, let us learn its lessons well. Let us use the Marxist-Leninist theory to light the path of struggle for the millions upon millions of people who will be pondering why the victory of the West has only given rise to misery and suffering. The sham appearance of communism is dead or dying; let the real communist movement of liberation begin! ■

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1640 S. Blue Island Ave.
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Famine in Somalia:

Cruel leftover from the Cold War

The Cold War between the East and West is over, but its cruel leftovers are still with us. This is most graphically seen in Somalia, where tens of thousands of people are starving to death.

Today no nationwide political authority exists in Somalia. The country has descended into chaos, with local street gangs running amok with automatic weapons the only authority in many cities. Rival warlords are disputing over who has the right to rule the country.

For the masses, life is a matter of daily struggle to obtain a small amount of grain to survive till the next day. In this struggle, the thugs armed with automatic weapons have an advantage, and use that power to monopolize and steal food.

The images from the tragedy in Somalia are again being used to reinforce well known Western stereotypes — about Africans being unable to organize their own affairs, and about the Western powers as the saviors of starving Third World people.

Who is responsible?

If you examine how the Somali crisis emerged, you can see that the world's imperialist big powers must take most of the blame.

No doubt Somalia is the victim of a drought which is ravaging large parts of Africa. Drought causes hardship and suffering but does not necessarily lead to mass famine. It is the deadly combination of drought with war which has created the famine.

But how did that war originate? Where did all these guns come from? Somalia is a terribly poor country. Surely it could neither manufacture nor buy such weapons with its own means.

The guns, of course, came from outside. And the roots of Somalia's tragedy lie in the fact that it has for a long time been a pawn in the power games of imperialist rivalry.

Background: a strategic prize disputed by imperialists

Somalia is mostly desert. Up to the 1960's the people were mostly semi-nomadic desert herders, organized on a tribal and clan basis. The Somali people did develop a common language and culture, but up through the 19th century could not develop a national state. Still, they were able to launch some fierce struggles against invading European colonialists.

At the end of the 19th century, European powers began invading the area and disputing over it. Their interest in Somalia was its strategic geographic position. Somalia occupies the Horn of Africa, the continent's easternmost point. At the southern tip of the Red Sea, occupiers of Somalia would be in a position to control East-West shipping through the Suez Canal. The ports of Somalia give ready access to the Arabian Peninsula,

the Persian Gulf and India. By the early 20th century Somalia had been divided between European imperialist powers.

Beginning in the 1960's the Somali colonies moved towards independence. In 1960 Italian and British Somaliland were merged into Somalia. (French Somaliland became independent Djibouti in the 70's.)

But those who took the reins of independent Somalia represented the local wealthy strata and they kept Somalia tied to the twists and turns of big power interests. The new government of Somalia remained in the Western sphere of influence. It was supported by aid from Italy and the United States. At the same time the U.S. was also giving large amounts of aid to Haile Selassie's regime in neighboring Ethiopia, with which Somalia had territorial disputes.

In 1969 a military coup brought General Siad Barre to power. The new regime declared itself revolutionary but in fact remained based on the upper strata. In foreign policy, it lined up with the Soviet imperialists. During the early 70's Siad Barre allowed Moscow to construct a naval base in Somalia. In return Moscow poured in military aid and thousands of military advisors.

Siad Barre used this aid to launch a war of expansion against Ethiopia. The colonial divisions of Somaliland had left the Somali people divided among different states. Besides Djibouti there were also significant numbers of Somalis living in Ethiopia's Ogaden province and in northeastern Kenya. Siad Barre used this fact to start a nationalistic crusade, a holy war on the altar of which he sacrificed Somalia's economic development.

The Soviets switch sides in a regional conflict

In the mid-70's neighboring Ethiopia was in upheaval following the overthrow of Haile Selassie. In this situation Siad Barre launched an all out war in Ogaden.

Meanwhile, the Soviets had found their man in Ethiopia — Colonel Mengistu. Once Mengistu took over Ethiopia, the Soviet Union poured in men and equipment to his regime. They found Ethiopia a much larger prize than Somalia. With Soviet and Cuban assistance, Mengistu was able to drive Siad Barre's forces out of Ogaden.

This breakup of the Soviet alliance was a major setback for Siad Barre. The military defeat in Ogaden inspired some military risings against him. But he was able to survive. He turned now to a Cold War alliance with the U.S. Economic aid began pouring in from the U.S. in the late 70's, and in 1980 President Jimmy Carter got Siad Barre to open up Somalia's ports for use by Carter's new Mideast Rapid Deployment Force.

Siad Barre hung out to dry as Cold War ends

During the 80's Siad Barre's regime

was a U.S. outpost against the Soviet military presence in East Africa. But with the winding down of the Cold War Somalia ceased to have much strategic value.

As Mengistu's regime lost its Soviet support, U.S. aid to Somalia dried up, and Siad Barre was left to deal with dissident movements by himself. And by this time there were plenty of dissidents within Somalia.

During the 80's people flooded into the towns from the countryside, impelled by the onrush of foreign money. Traditional rural life was disrupted, but no economic base in the cities was developed for the new residents. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of people had flooded into Somalia from Ogaden and other provinces of Ethiopia, escaping the civil wars and starvation there.

Siad Barre tried to balance off the demands of different sectors with the distribution of foreign aid, but when this

dried up Barre's house of cards collapsed. His own army degenerated into armed bands of robbers roaming through the capital, Mogadishu. Rebel armies had formed in the frontier areas in 1989 and they closed in on the capital in 1990. Siad Barre fled the country in January 1991.

Since then Somalia has been without a government. The rebel forces were not able to unite and form a new regime. Instead they have remained deadlocked in warfare. Without any semblance of a government, the Somali people have been left helpless in the face of the drought. Today, starvation faces whoever does not have access to a cache of guns left over from the days of Siad Barre's superpower client-state.

So in the final analysis, who is responsible for the Somali tragedy? It is the alliance of world imperialism and the local exploiters of Somalia. Without the two acting in concert, the masses there would not be suffering as they are today. ■



The World in Struggle

Workers in Poland strike against Walesa's austerity

Poland is seeing a rash of strikes against the anti-worker austerity policies followed by President Lech Walesa.

In August workers at Walesa's old work place, the Gdansk shipyard, were on strike. Shipyard management suppressed it by firing dozens of the strikers, a move that was supported by Walesa.

So the workers lost that round. But shortly afterwards there was a wave of strikes among Silesian coal miners. 1,000 miners successfully concluded their strike in early September. Also in September the Ursus tractor plant near Warsaw was on strike. Workers there chanted "Down with Walesa!"

The most critical strike now going on is at the FSM auto plant. Walesa is hungry to sell off the state-owned plant to the multinational corporation Fiat. But the strike is delaying these plans. In late September Walesa angrily broke off negotiations with the workers and threatened to fire all 2,500 of them.

The strikes have galvanized opposition to Walesa's harsh anti-worker policies. Political forces in the country are again being shaken up. The Solidarity union has split yet again, with one wing of the organization coming out in support of workers' strikes. ■

General strike in Ecuador

A national general strike hit Ecuador on September 23. Workers brought the economy to a standstill. Clashes broke out between workers and the police.

In the city of Guayaquil, demonstrators burnt buses, looted shops and battled police. In the capital, Quito, workers rioted outside the presidential palace.

The strike came after three weeks of protest against austerity measures imposed by the new government. The regime has ordered big price rises in basic goods and services. Doctors and nurses closed hospitals the previous week to oppose job cuts in health services. ■

Bolivian workers denounce corruption

Thousands of workers marched throughout Bolivia in protest against government corruption.

In La Paz, the capital, demonstrators set off dynamite caps and shouted slogans against the government. They shut down traffic in the center of the city.

Recently, a number of senior police officers and government officials have been charged with illegal deals. It is also suspected that friends of the president have been given favors in the selloff of two luxury hotels.

The Bolivian workers seem to have drawn inspiration from the mass demonstrations in neighboring Brazil which impelled the politicians there to impeach President Collor on corruption charges. ■

Wildcat strike wave in Indonesia

Hundreds of wildcat strikes have taken place this year in Indonesia. The harshly exploited laborers of Indonesia are struggling to raise their wages and to build trade unions.

The official minimum wage in Indonesia is \$1 a day. But many workers are forced to toil for less than that, as the 44% unemployment forces workers to accept any job they can get. Many multinational corporations have set up sweat shops there to produce high-quality goods sold at high prices in Western countries. Workers for Nike, for example, produce shoes they could never afford to buy themselves.

When workers go on strike in Indonesia they are immediately faced with a sharp struggle against the powers-that-be. The capitalists call in the fascist Suharto regime to protect their privileges, and the military intervenes to smash the strikes.

The rapidly expanding strike wave shows that the workers are not willing to accept repression and starvation wages any longer. ■

Nurses strike in Bangladesh

Some 15,000 government nurses went on strike October 3. They are demanding that their monthly salary be increased from \$45 to \$60. The strike effectively shut down eight government hospitals and 500 rural health centers across the country. Volunteers will be looking after critically ill patients during the strike. ■

A revolt of the poor in Japan

The Japanese economy is commonly described as one of modern capitalism's miracles. And indeed, technological and economic growth have been rapid in recent decades, making Japan into an economic superpower.

But today the Japanese economy is experiencing a slowdown. The country has also been wracked by financial crisis.

The Japanese capitalists like to boast of the social harmony in their country. From their declarations, one would think that everyone is satisfied and loyal to the status quo. But the reality of class conflict has not disappeared from Japan.

This struggle is dramatically shown in a revolt of poor workers which has engulfed the Airin neighborhood of Osaka, Japan's third largest city. Beginning October 1, hundreds of day laborers have torched cars and fought riot police. 1,500 riot police were called out as the laborers protested against a workers' loan center.

The workers were protesting stricter screening procedures for workers who apply for relief loans of up to \$16 a day. One news report quoted a man yelling as

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