

THE COMMUNIST

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

"A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and



strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual and more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can be considered a Communist."

Mao Tsetung

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POSTAL WORKERS THREATEN STRIKE

Demanding a decent contract and insisting on 'no contract, no work', thousands of postal workers across the country joined in demonstrations on July 12. Responding to a call from locals in New York and New Jersey, over 3,000 postal workers picketed the United States Postal Service (USPS) in Washington, D.C., and thousands more turned out in Los Angeles, New York City, the San Francisco Bay Area and Chicago. With their contract due to expire on July 20 and negotiations still going on in Washington, these workers served notice to both the Postal Service and the union's national leadership that they won't accept a sell out.

This contract covers 650,000 workers in three unions -- the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the Mail Handlers Division of the Laborers Union. It is the largest contract to be negotiated this year. Postal workers are fighting against efforts to cut their wages, against the deterioration of their working conditions, against layoffs, and against a union leadership which refuses to lead a struggle in the interests of the rank and file.

PUBLIC SERVICE CUTBACKS REFLECT CRISIS

What postal workers are fighting is no different from the fight of other workers. Jobs in the public sector do not protect workers from imperialist crisis. The same takeover strategy that monopoly capital has been following in industry is affecting government employees also. Decaying capitalism leads inevitably to a bloated bureaucracy, an expensive war machine and the multiplication of persons not employed in material production. Cut-

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BAKKE DECISION ATTACKS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

On Wednesday morning, June 28th, the United States Supreme Court, in a 5 to 4 decision, ruled that Allan Bakke be admitted to the University of California Medical School at Davis. Saying that the quota system, which guaranteed 16 of 100 places in each entering class of the medical school to oppressed nationalities, violated Bakke's constitutional rights as guaranteed by the 14th amendment, the court stated in Justice Powell's majority opinion, "Preferring members of any one group for no reason other than race or ethnic origin is discrimination for its own sake. This the Constitution forbids."

Thus, in one fell swoop, the court gave its constitutional stamp of approval to the bourgeois myth of "reverse discrimination". Despite assertions to the contrary, the decision is a serious attack on affirmative action programs for women and oppressed nationalities not only in the schools and universities but also in employment.

The court's decision climaxed a month which should leave no doubt that imperialist crisis has led to a stepped up chauvinist offensive intensifying domestic oppression and aggravating national contradictions in preparation for new imperialist war. Within four weeks we have seen the passage of Proposition 13, the defense of the "right" of

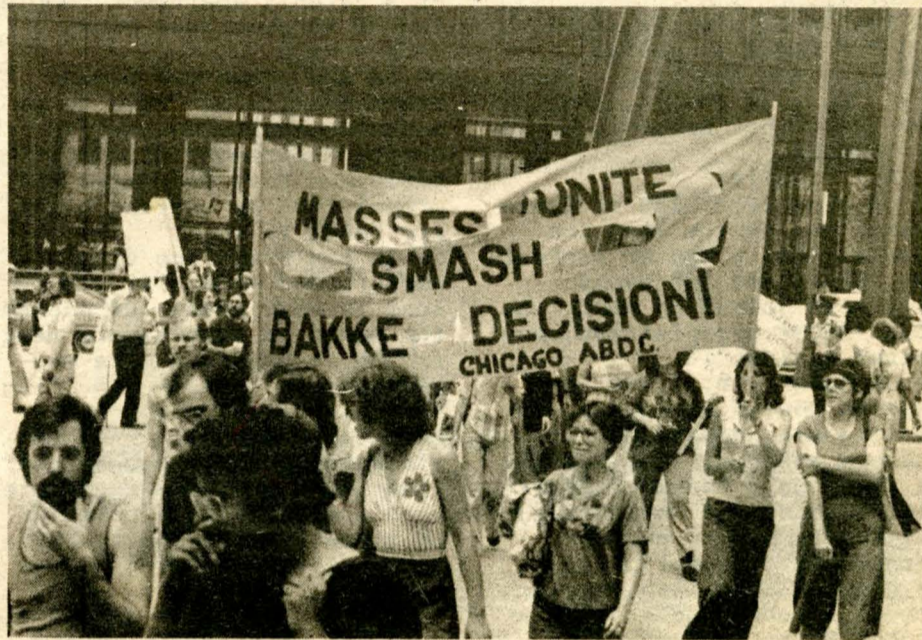


Photo by TC

Nazis to march in Chicago by the bourgeois state, and now the upholding of "reverse discrimination". This offensive must be met with increased efforts on our part to unite all who can be united against the attack on affirmative action programs and all other democratic rights of women and oppressed nationalities.

We must broaden our outlook in building this counter-offensive as part of our international responsibility to build the broadest united front against superpower hegemonism and war preparations.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE BAKKE DECISION

With the "deceptive liberal gesture of a sly slave owner," (CI Resolution on the Negro Question) the Supreme Court and a whole bagfull of reformers want us to believe that it has upheld the principle of affirmative action.

For Justice Powell, writing the majority opinion, the 14th amendment which was passed to guarantee the rights of Afro-Americans emancipated from slavery, is reduced sole-

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100,000 MARCH FOR ERA

In the largest mass demonstration in Washington DC since the Vietnam War nearly 100,000 people marched in support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) on July 9th. This was the largest women's rights rally on record, and involved participation of more than 300 groups from every state of the Union. The focus of the march was to push Congress to support an extension of the March 1979 deadline for approving the ERA.

The ERA was originally introduced in Congress in 1923, three years after women got the vote, by Dr. Alice Paul, a life time advocate of suffrage and women's rights. The July 9th march celebrated the first anniversary of her death.

The present version of the ERA finally passed Congress in 1972. So far 35 states have ratified the ERA, still short of the 38 required to make it law.

SEVEN YEAR EXTENSION DEMANDED

The current struggle focuses on the proposed Congress-

sional Resolution to extend the deadline for ratification of the amendment for seven years.

Opponents of the ERA say that such an extension is unfair. They view the failure of the ERA to have won ratification in three additional states as a measure that the people don't want it.

But the purpose of the ERA is to establish full legal equality for women. It is not a time test or a race. There is no tradition or custom establishing the seven year deadline for ratification. The first 18 amendments, including the Bill of Rights, had no such limit. The seven year ratification limitation on the ERA is not part of the actual amendment, but is one of the rules Congress proposed for its passage by the states. Congress is completely within its powers to change the time period for ratification and extend it.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR ERA

The demonstration showed that there is widespread sup-

port for both the ERA and the extension of the ratification period. And, that this support is growing. Participation in the march was multinational as well as including both men and women. Groups represented included the NAACP, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, AFSCME, the UAW, the AFL-CIO, Local 1199 of the Hospital Workers Union, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Gray Panthers, Girl Scouts, Planned Parenthood, numerous religious groups as well as students from many colleges and universities.

With such massive involvement representing a wide spectrum of the American people willing to march in defense of the rights of women to full democratic equality, why does the ERA appear to be in danger of defeat?

REFORMISM LIMITS STRUGGLE

The answer lies in the bourgeois reformism that characterizes the leadership of the ERA movement. This reformism

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RESISTANCE TO PROP 13 GROWS

In the previous issue of The Communist we exposed the phoney character of the so-called tax revolt in California. We showed that the essence of Proposition 13 was not tax relief but an attack on public services for working people and especially a chauvinist attack on the gains made by national minorities in recent years in their struggles for equality of jobs and services.

Since the passage of Proposition 13 on June 6th, the bourgeoisie, through the press and their political spokesmen, have demagogically played up the phoney tax revolt, spreading this movement across the country.

Yet in California layoffs and cut backs in social services are becoming a reality. The real revolt, the revolt against Proposition 13 is growing.

For example:

- On June 16th, 150 students walked out of the East Los Angeles Skills Center protesting threatened cut backs. They were joined by ABDC, the local MECHA organization, and United Against 13.

- On June 12th, 1,000 Los Angeles county employees, including many county hospital workers and patients, marched on the County Board of Supervisors to demand no layoffs, cut backs, and to protest inadequate care for patients.

- Also on June 12th, public school teachers held a rally in the East Los Angeles Community College football stadium. In another action, several hundred community college teachers gathered at the Hyatt Regency ballroom to plan how to prevent layoffs. And firemen from the L. A. county fire department demonstrated at the county court house.

- On June 17th, 125 students walked out of Los Angeles' Lincoln High School because

of cut backs in elective programs. On June 25th, 250 students walked out of this same high school. Six days later, 500 students from 11 Los Angeles high schools demonstrated outside the school administration building demanding no cancellation of summer school, no cut backs in sports facilities, and no layoffs of teachers.

- California renters' organizations are working to qualify an initiative for a constitutional amendment requiring that property tax reductions be passed on to renters. In San Diego some tenants are circulating a petition demanding rent roll backs. Tenants of a 54 unit apartment complex in Los Angeles have begun a rent strike.

- In San Diego two broad based coalitions have taken up the struggle against 13. County department of education employees have protested the proposition by wearing black arm bands to work.

- In San Francisco city workers and community groups led by SEIU local 400 packed the Board of Supervisors meeting while hundreds more outside joined them in demanding that new tax revenues come from taxes on businesses to avoid layoffs and cut backs. Twenty one thousand signatures were presented on a petition to a San Francisco city council meeting demanding no cut backs.

- In San Francisco the people came out at midnight to prevent the closing of 3 community emergency health facilities. At the Harbor Hospital the people blocked doors and prevented police from hanging closed signs. The staff of this hospital have been laid off but the people and staff are working out ways to keep it open. At the Alemany Community Health Center the demonstrators won an agreement to

keep the center open until they could have a meeting with the mayor. In other health care protests, directors, staff, and patients of 4 of the 5 San Francisco district health centers held demonstrations to protest threatened closure.

- In San Francisco the MUNI Coalition of public transport workers and supporters held a meeting protesting fare increases and cut backs in service. Also in San Francisco staff workers of the Mission Cultural Center were fired or transferred in retaliation for demonstrating against cut backs in the community arts program.

- In Oakland the Labor and Community Coalition had 500 people at the Alameda County Board of Supervisors June 16th meeting. Board of Education meetings in Oakland have been jammed with people protesting cut backs in day care centers, vocational education, and special programs. Also in Oakland the regional park employees of AFSCME protested layoffs and park closings.

- At the state capital in Sacramento 1,000 people demonstrated June 26th against cut backs in services to the poor, elderly, and disabled. Three days later 5,000 state employees booed Governor Brown off the speakers platform at a Sacramento rally sponsored by the California State Employees Association to demand pay raises.

If Proposition 13 is to benefit the people as its supporters claim, why all this outrage? Why all this demonstrating? Why are people taking to the streets, to city council chambers, to boards of supervisors and to boards of education?

CUT BACKS BEGIN

The fact is:

Summer school has been cancelled in Los Angeles and San Diego to save money for the fall semester. Ten thousand Los Angeles summer school employees are being forced to take a 2 month unpaid vacation. Another 10,000 Los Angeles school district employees will

go on a 10 month work year with a corresponding reduction in pay. Two hundred seventy thousand students normally attend Los Angeles summer school. The cancellations will create hardships for them, especially seniors who need a course to graduate.

As of June 28th, 2,148 California public employees have been laid off. Santa Barbara County has laid off 200 county workers and shut down its county hospital to all but outpatient care. Los Angeles County General Hospital is threatened with a loss of 1,000 beds and the laying off of 78% of its staff.

A senior California legislator estimates that 75,000 state employees will lose their jobs in the first year of proposition 13.

Despite promises to the contrary, landlords have raised rents. In San Fernando 40% of the people surveyed reported rent increases since proposition 13.

Governor Brown has vetoed a 2.5% pay raise for state employees. He has frozen employees' salaries which means an actual wage cut. He has frozen new hiring. In the face of layoffs he has cajoled state employees to speed up, to "maintain essential services."

He has also vetoed a 2.5% cost of living increase for aid to families with dependent children. He has cut back on programs for the elderly and handicapped. He has cut a migrant child care program from \$2 million to \$1 million. He has cut \$8.3 million from county hospital outpatient and community treatment centers. He has cut capital outlays for beaches and parks.

Everywhere programs for youth and services for the poor, the elderly, and the handicapped are being reduced or eliminated as local governments cut back their budgets by 10% to 20%. San Diego has cut its city budget by \$24 million. Los Angeles has proposed increasing water rates by 50%, and other municipalities are considering

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ERA MARCH

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is particularly reflected in the leadership of the National Organization of Women (NOW). It was NOW that called for the demonstration in Washington in an effort to keep the possibility for ratification alive. But in a similar approach, as characterized by the Houston National Women's Conference last November, the leadership continues to rely on the Democratic Party and President Carter for achievement of their goals. Featured participants in the demonstration were various administration officials. And the attention of the crowd was focused on a message from President Carter delivered by his special assistant for Women's Affairs, Margaret Costanza. "There is no time limit on human rights", Carter's message read. But this mouthpiece for the bourgeoisie in no way addressed how the Congress could actually be forced to pass the extension.

March leaders called on participants to stay in Washington until they had firm commitments from every member of Congress. This tactic was based on appealing solely to the bourgeois political framework. It is this reliance on bourgeois politicians that has failed over the past three years to win ratification of the ERA.

NOW's basic error is to rely on the bourgeois govern-

ment to emancipate women. The support the ERA had in the first 30 months after its passage by Congress came as a response to the massive mobilization of the anti-imperialist women's movement.

MASS MOVEMENT WON GAINS FOR WOMEN

In the late 60's and early 70's thousands of women went to the streets time and time again to demand the right of abortion, equal pay for equal work, equal employment opportunities, adequate child care facilities, decent health care and other basic democratic rights. Women were politically active as they had not been for years, playing a full role in the anti-imperialist movement to end the war in Vietnam and the movements of oppressed nationalities. The effect of the women's liberation movement has been felt throughout society as women moved to organize on their jobs and in their communities.

But in the past five years the anti-imperialist character of the women's movement has declined as bourgeois reformists gained leadership of it. And the bourgeois reformist forces like the leadership in NOW have attempted to use the force organized by the women's movement as a foundation for their own personal advancement into bourgeois politics. Where early demonstra-

tions for women's equality questioned the property system that is the basis for the domestic slavery and inequality in the workplace for the masses of women, the NOW dominated women's movement has confined the struggle to the limitations of bourgeois legality. Although the tactics of relying primarily on letter writing and pressuring Congress have failed to achieve the desired results in the past, Eleanor Smeal, current president of NOW continues to appeal to women to rely on these reformist tactics.

BUILD PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

In spite of this reformist leadership, over and over again we see the militant evidence of the desire and commitment of the masses of women to continue their fight for equality and freedom. Communists must fight for the leadership of this movement for, as Lenin pointed out, the proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women. The struggle for legal equality is not enough for the complete emancipation of women, but it is an important part of that struggle. In fact it is in the struggle to achieve legal equality that the true nature of women's oppression becomes absolutely clear.

As the July 9th march showed, however, the struggle for leadership of the women's movement is a struggle to overcome the hegemony of the reformists and reformism.

There is no way that this

struggle can be waged from the outside. Our responsibility to the women's movement is to go into the mass organizations and mass actions now under the sway of the reformists and fight for influence and leadership. The proletarian line will defeat reformist leadership only through proving its correctness in the day-to-day struggle of the mass organizations and mass actions where the masses struggling for women's equality are to be found.

The struggle for Marxist-Leninist leadership of the mass movement presupposes a struggle to overcome male chauvinism in our own ranks. We must overcome the tendency to relegate the struggle for democratic rights of women to a secondary level.

In order to build on the revolutionary aspirations of the masses of women and link their just struggle with the struggle of oppressed nationalities and the working class, communists have to directly take up work to support the ERA struggle, to fight against abortion cutbacks, to expose state practices of forced sterilization, to fight for equal opportunity in education and employment and to build the many other areas of spontaneous struggle.

In this manner the struggle of women for full equality can be broadened and linked with the united front against imperialism. Only such a conscious movement will successfully bring thousands of women and men into full play in the struggle to change the conditions in the US and the world.

MASSES PROTEST NAZIS

Over 2000 people gathered to oppose the July 9th Nazi rally in Marquette Park. The demonstration drew a wide spectrum of groups reflecting the broad character of the anti-Nazi opposition. Those attending included groups ranging from the Zionist Jewish Defense League to local church groups, community organizations, labor unions, to a number of Marxist-Leninist organizations as well as many individuals.

On the other hand, only 22 Nazis and supporters who numbered less than that gathered to stage their much publicized rally. Party leader Frank Collin and his band spewed forth hatred for Jews and Blacks, pledging to lead future marches into Chicago's Black neighborhoods. The Nazis were barely audible, however, due to a defective sound system and could hardly be seen as they were separated from about 2000 onlookers by a wooden barricade and hundreds of helmeted police. Jews and other anti-Nazi forces met the reactionary demagoguery of this small band of bigots with militant resistance. Several scuffles broke out before and after the rally. A total of 68 people were arrested by the plain clothes police officers who were liberally sprinkled throughout the Marquette Park crowd.

July 9th was the second time in two weeks that thousands gathered to confront Nazi rallies. In each instance, it was only the hundreds of police assigned to protect the Nazis that prevented the masses from silencing them. At the Marquette Park rally, as many as 1000 riot gear equipped police were assigned to prevent counter-demonstrators from entering the park. A recently released

Chicago Police Department report revealed a total of \$175 thousand spent for security at the Nazi rally.

Such protection, usually reserved only for a president or an important foreign dignitary, provided ample evidence of the bourgeois state's interest in defending these demagogues. Placing the state apparatus at the service of the Nazis is part of a broad campaign by the bourgeoisie to fan national chauvinist sentiments. Groups like the Frank Collin led National Socialist Party stand as a grim reminder of what the most reactionary section of finance-capital, whose interests they represent, will resort to in order to preserve its rule.

While the broad character of the anti-Nazi demonstration is a strength, thus far mass resistance has been undermined by community groups and even by communists. Within the Marquette Park community for example, local landlords as well as religious leaders and business people used leaflets, church sermons and the local press to urge people to stay home and ignore the Nazis. This line reflected the concern of these interests for damage to private property that might result from an anti-Nazi confrontation. But by not taking an active stand against the Nazis and by playing up anti-Black, anti-Jewish and anti-outside agitator hysteria, these "leaders" provided tacit encouragement to the Nazis.

A similar role was played by the numerous groups who had pledged to protest in Skokie but refused to oppose the Nazi rally in Marquette Park. The bankrupt opportunists were typified by the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race,

a "coalition of religious organizations" who would have marched in Skokie but not in Marquette Park, since "there was no Jewish community in the area." This blatantly chauvinist position seriously compromised the anti-Nazi struggle by giving underhanded support to the anti-Black sentiment the Nazis were seeking to inflame.

The need for communist leadership was no where more evident than within the counter-demonstration. First of all, the initiators of the rally, the Equal Rights Council, a Communist Labor Party led group, failed to provide leadership at the counter-demonstration site. Chants were mainly spontaneous and weak. A system of monitors which the Zionist Jewish Defense League was able to dominate, proved to be ineffective. The police easily maneuvered the march into a circular route which never got nearer than three blocks to the park and which ended trapped beneath a viaduct. A total breakdown of discipline in the ranks of the marchers occurred. Many de-

monstrators rushed to the front, ready to charge police lines, only to realize the futility of such a move. In the face of this disorder, the Equal Rights Council abandoned the counter-demonstration! A rally they scheduled for the end of the march was neither cancelled nor held.

Some communists played a divisive role by tailing bourgeois community groups. Bowing to the line that "the community doesn't want violence," the CPM-L opposed the counter-demonstration. Such a position reflects a total failure to appreciate the task of communists to lead from within the mass struggle.

The crisis which breeds Nazis and fascist agents of all kinds in service to finance-capital cannot be expected to subside. The kind of weaknesses reflected by the organization around the counter-demonstration must be overcome. The failure to take up the development of political work of this nature can only lead to disastrous consequences in the future.



photo by THE COMMUNIST

RESISTANCE GROWS

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increases in garbage, sewage, and water as well as local sales taxes.

The cut backs in services are affecting national minorities and women most severely. Because of national and sex oppression they bear the brunt of layoffs and cut backs in social services and state aid. Of the 8,300 Los Angeles city workers who face layoffs, 62% are national minorities and 28% are women. The largest employer of the predominantly Black residents of South-Central Los Angeles is the government.

The reactionary furor whipped up by 13 has been a means to attack the struggle for equality in education. For example, the state senate has approved a constitutional amendment to block court ordered busing in Los Angeles. Supporters of the amendment argued that court ordered busing would cost as much as \$110 million, and how could the schools justify spending \$1,600 a month for a bus driver while firing 7,800 teachers? It is no surprise that Jarvis, a co-sponsor of proposition 13, has slandered public education by calling it "one of the biggest mafia rackets."

Proposition 13 was never intended to work for the benefit of the people. It is laying off public employees, it is cutting back on education and social services, it is shifting the tax burden and cost of public services more heavily onto the working class, and it is reaping windfall profits for the realtors and California businesses.

BROWN'S EXPERIMENT

With cut backs and resistance both growing, a large sector of the bourgeoisie is concerned.

Joseph Mitchell, president of Beneficial Standard Corporation, urged businesses to hire more help than they need this summer because, "We have the stage set for additional problems which can severely impact our communities and their economies." The problems he has in mind are the kind of things that happens when hundreds of thousands of state employees swell unemployment lines, when large numbers of poor people are denied state aid, and when millions of youth idle away the summer without jobs, summer school, or recreational programs.

This is the perspective in which Brown's use of state funds to cushion the blows of proposition 13 can be understood. Brown is using the state's \$5.8 billion revenue surplus to make up for some of the property tax revenues lost by local governments. By channeling state surplus money to local governments whose revenues have been drastically reduced, the governor can control the rate at which layoffs and cut backs occur. Over the long run the estimated 300,000 jobs to be eliminated by 13 will still be cut, but this will be spread over time, in an effort to sap the resistance of the masses.

Thus, \$72 million from the state surplus to Los Angeles has forestalled the laying off of 8,300 city workers. Likewise the Los Angeles school

district will call back 7,800 laid off teachers. San Francisco is laying off 200 workers instead of the 5,000 originally planned. In a move typical of this tactic, 15 national minority firemen in the Los Angeles area who had been hired under an affirmative action program were given layoff notices, but later were called back when state funds became available.

This is the "kind of experimentation" that President Carter is watching. He stated that "The whole nation, including myself and the Congress will be watching very closely in the next few months to see how California deals with it (proposition 13)." What Carter wants to know is the extent to which Brown will be able to stifle popular resistance in the face of stepped up efforts, represented by proposition 13, to force the masses of working and oppressed people to bear the burden of imperialist crisis.

BUREAUCRATS BLUNT RESISTANCE

If the bourgeoisie succeeds in this "experiment" it will be in no small part because of powerful assistance from the trade union bureaucracy. They have been very narrow in their opposition to 13 and they have not taken up the task of opposing its reactionary chauvinist character.

Before the election, rather than mobilize the rank-and-file in opposition and rely on the direct action of the masses to oppose 13, they encouraged the electorate to vote for proposition 8. This was an alternative property tax relief measure which would have had a milder effect.

After the election the labor bureaucrats have urged teachers and state employees to wait and see if state surplus funds would be forthcoming. The California State Employees Union, which had threatened to call a general strike of its 150,000 members if a pay freeze was enforced, passively waited to talk to the government after Brown's veto of the raises.

Imperialism necessarily means the abnormal and parasitic growth of the bureaucratic state apparatus, the costly war machine, and the non productive or service sector of the economy. Taxes are one means to finance this growth. Cut backs in social services are one of the few ways to limit it. Both tactics are a means to pass the crisis of imperialism on to the backs of the working and oppressed masses.

Like the Supreme Court's recent Bakke decision, proposition 13 reflects the intensification of the contradictions of imperialism. The bourgeoisie has tried to use the real outrage of the masses of people against the tax burden required to finance the parasitic capitalist state as a weapon to intensify national and class oppression by cutting social services. As we said in the previous issue of THE COMMUNIST, "The Bakke case and Proposition 13 are coherent pieces of a common reactionary front. They dramatize our urgent need for a broad, popular, nationwide campaign with the capacity to defend the interests of the working and oppressed masses against every attack on our democratic rights and to push forward the struggle for equal rights."

BAKKE DECISION

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ly to a guarantee of "individual rights". In fact this makes it a vehicle to perpetuate social discrimination against Afro-American and other oppressed nationalities and women. The bourgeoisie takes this 'guarantee of individual rights' and says that Bakke, as a white male, had his individual rights violated because he was not 'allowed' to compete for 16 of 100 seats available in applying for medical school at UC Davis. This defense of individual formal equality under the bourgeois law, assumes there is real equality under a system of imperialism. It assumes that women and oppressed nationalities have an 'equal chance' at the other 84 seats, or for that matter at any place in higher education, jobs, and other aspects of life.

But the bourgeoisie's own statistics prove that 'reverse discrimination' is noth-

ing but a myth. The facts are that the percentage of oppressed nationalities in medical school has never been greater than 12% (and it has been falling in the last 2 years) even though the overall population of oppressed nationalities is at least twice that number. There is one Chicano doctor for every 33,000 Chicanos, one Black doctor for every 5,000 Blacks as compared to one white doctor for every 649 whites. Basically the figures are worse for all other professions.

In employment, the rate of unemployed Afro-Americans is more than twice that of whites, among Puerto Ricans it is more than three times that of whites. According to the Dept. of Labor's June statistics, 95% of all jobs given out to youth were to white youth in the month of June. This had the effect of dropping the rate of unemployment officially among white youth

from 17% to 11%, while unemployment among Afro-American youth remained at 37%. The income of oppressed nationalities is one-half that of whites and according to government statistics the gap has widened in the last 10 years.

This month in a national study HEW found that the infant mortality rate among oppressed nationalities is more than twice that of whites and that life expectancy is almost 10 years less.

This is just some of the reality of life under an imperialist system which has been built and sustained on the basis of inequality among nations, and between men and women. It is this that Powell and the rest of the bourgeoisie wants us to ignore when he states, "the fatal flaw (of the Davis affirmative action program) is its disregard for individual rights as guaranteed by the 14th amendment." This is too much even for the dissenters on the Court. Justice Marshall stated: "Today's judgement ignores the fact that for several hundred years, Negroes have been discriminated against not as individuals, but rather solely because of the color of their skins." Justice Blackmun added, "It is somewhat ironic to have us so deeply disturbed over a program where race is an element of consciousness and yet to be aware of the fact, that institutions of higher learning have given preferences to those possessed of athletic skills, to the children of alumni, to the affluent who may bestow their

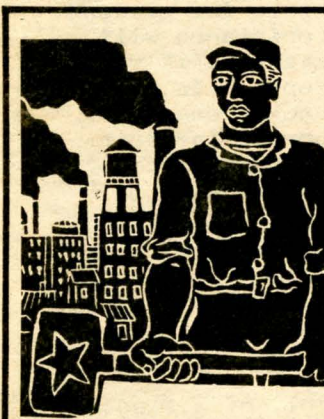
largess on the institutions, and to those having connections with celebrities, the famous and the powerful." What a fitting description of the equality which exists in universities within bourgeois society!

Both Marshall and Blackmun spoke to the fact that there is no other way to make up for past discrimination except through strict quotas. "In order to get beyond racism we must first take race into account. There is no other way. And in order that we treat some people equally, we must treat them differently."

But Powell and the court insist on the illusion of affirmative action without quotas.

Instead of quotas, they want affirmative action programs which include race as a factor, but only as one of many. "In such an admissions program race or ethnic background may be deemed a 'plus' in an applicant's file, yet it doesn't insulate the individual from comparison with all other candidates for the available seats." Other factors to be considered are geographic origin, social origin, professional, or extracurricular activities, etc. Race is a factor only recently added as a result of the civil rights movement. In other words, if you are a musician, a football player, from a farm, or from Montana you would have a plus factor, as much of a plus factor as

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FACTORY EXPOSURES

FACTORY EXPOSURES is a regular column of THE COMMUNIST. We encourage all workers and Marxist-Leninists to send in articles concerning trade union struggles, local grievances, health and safety issues and other forms of workplace abuse.

THIS ARTICLE WAS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMUNIST AS A FOLLOW-UP TO "SCAFFOLD COLLAPSE KILLS 51" (THE COMMUNIST, VOL. IV # 12).

It was speed-up of work procedures at the Willow Island power plant in northern West Virginia that led directly to the deaths of 51 workers there on April 27. This finding, reported in the May 8 edition of THE COMMUNIST, was further substantiated by information released June 8 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) investigation team.

One member of the OSHA investigation team remarked "What happened here is that they were cutting corners for the sake of speed." What must be stated even more bluntly is that 51 workmen were murdered by the greed of the capitalists who own Research-Cottrell.

Most mass murderers would face the severest penalties of law. But not when they are the capitalist owners of a firm and their victims only the workers they employ. For the interests of the capitalist class dictate the law, and speed-up of work is a common practice capitalists use to further their own interests.

INCREASED PROFITS... AND DANGER

The scaffolding on which the workers stood fell while the 29th ring of concrete was being poured. The speed-up of construction, however, had begun much earlier--following the pouring of the 11th layer. At that time the company, Research-Cottrell, began reducing the number of bolts used to anchor the scaffolding and increased the speed at which the concrete for the new layer was hoisted to the top of the tower. Further, the concrete into which the scaffolding was bolted was deliberately not tested so that work could continue at a faster rate.

The administrator of OSHA, Dr. Eulah Bingham, stated, "We believe that if proper tests had been conducted on concrete prior to removing

forms, if the scaffold framework system had been properly secured to the tower and if beam sections supporting the concrete lifting system atop the tower had been anchored and maintained to support the maximum intended load, this tragedy would never have occurred."

WORKERS' FAMILIES ORGANIZE

Since the collapse, 34 families of the dead workmen have joined together to form the Willow Island Disaster Organization to pursue further investigation of the collapse. R.V. Bowser, president of this group and father of one of the workers killed, responded to the OSHA report by saying, "Nothing in the world can compensate us for what we have lost. The only thing we can ever hope to get out of this is to make sure it never happens again."

The Disaster Organization was set up when information came out that prior to the accident top level OSHA bureaucrats failed to follow up the warning by one of their investigators that unsafe conditions existed at the construction site. An investigation was made only after 51 men fell to their deaths.

Bowser accurately pointed out that "In their findings of conditions that existed at the disaster site, OSHA has convicted itself. If OSHA has failed so miserably in the enforcement of safety regulations, can they then be trusted to bring out all the facts in this disaster?"

The lack of effectiveness of OSHA is no accident. On May 7, the day before the OSHA team reported and tried to excuse its negligent conduct on the grounds of "lack of personnel", the US House of Representatives cut \$29 million from OSHA's budget for next year. John Slack, a Representative from West Virginia, explaining why he voted for the cut back, revealed that "I get an awful lot of flack from business people

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BAKKE DECISION IN THE WORKPLACE

The US Supreme Court recently refused to review and thereby upheld a 1973 consent decree that required AT&T to hire and promote women and minorities. The bourgeois media hailed this decision as evidence of the even handed character of its rule. In NEWSWEEK an article proclaimed, "After a week of confusion over the Supreme Court's Bakke decision, it is becoming clear that there will be little backtracking on affirmative action." Editorials in the NEW YORK TIMES, LOS ANGELES TIMES and other papers echo this position. But facts paint a different picture.

A legal spokesman for AT&T pointed out that this consent decree expires next January. Under the consent decree AT&T was forced to make payments of \$42 million to compensate victims of past discrimination. The company also agreed to establish hiring goals for women and minorities in various categories on the basis of percentage. This program was taken to court in 1975 by three unions - Communications Workers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Alliance of Independent Telephone Workers. The specific target of their attack was the "override" provision which allowed white males to be passed over for promotion in favor of women and minorities with less seniority. In 1977 the court ruled in favor of the AT&T program and it was this decision the Supreme Court upheld.

In fact the override provision is already being ruled out of the program as a result of the Bakke decision. The AT&T spokesman defended taking the heart out of the program by pointing out, "The Bakke case leaves some questions open about affirmative action programs by private employers." Because affirmative action programs established at workplaces as a result of consent decrees are not affected by the Bakke decision directly, the spokesman added, "After that (January) we will have to do some more looking at the Bakke case to see what impact that has."

While the Supreme Court attempted to cloud over their denial of affirmative action programs with the AT&T case, it is hardly the final word from the court on affirmative action. The Weber case, now at the Supreme Court, will have a greater impact on affirmative action at the workplace. The Weber case raises clearly the issues of national oppression and job discrimination.

This case involved a Kaiser aluminum plant in Gramercy, Louisiana, where blacks are 46% of the population and yet are less than 2% of the skilled workers. At that plant, an affirmative action program between Kaiser and the Steelworkers Union was established to hire black and white trainees alternately. However a federal court found this to be illegal "reverse discrimination" under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In the twisted bourgeois logic of individual rights, the court found that the only affirmative action programs possible would be for individuals who could prove they had been discriminated against. Remedial quotas designed to overcome centuries of past discrimination were illegal. Further the court found that Executive Order 11246, which requires companies doing business with the government to have affirmative action programs, to be a violation of the Civil Rights Act as well.

Weber is only one of many cases now in the courts attacking employment gains for women and minorities. Despite bourgeois attempts at deception the message is clear. Bakke represents a green light for attacks on affirmative action not only in the schools, but in the workplaces.

BAKKE

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if you were an oppressed nationality!

The majority opinion assumes that universities are eager to implement affirmative action programs and that university admission departments are eager to assign 'plus' points to oppressed nationality applicants. It pretends that they are falling all over themselves to remedy centuries of discrimination.

Facts dispell this fantasy. The UC Davis Admissions Office encouraged Bakke to file reverse discrimination charges. It helped him prepare his case, and the UC Regents themselves, who were the ones answerable to the Bakke challenge and who had the responsibility of defending their affirmative action program, put up a lackluster defense. When the Supreme Court decision came down they expressed their satisfaction with it. In fact, the Harvard plan itself, which the majority opinion held up as a model, was created after World War II to limit the number of Jewish applicants applying primarily from the East coast. That is, the Harvard plan leaves the universities accountable only to themselves. It means in practice no affirmative action programs and the acceptance of very few minority applicants. It is a plan to reinforce the inequalities built into the imperialist system.

In fact to make sure that every door is nailed shut, Powell and the majority says courts must ignore centuries of ruthless discrimination sanctioned by every kind of law unless an individual woman or minority can prove that as an individual they were specifically discriminated against. "State universities could not," he says, "have as an objective the remedying of 'societal dis-

crimination' at large." In plain English, as institutions of the bourgeois state, they function to perpetuate it.

RESPONSE TO THE DECISION

The rest of the bourgeois state, without acting surprised, gave its approval to the decision. Attorney General Bell, who last October had filed a "friend of the court" brief on behalf of President Carter which supported 'voluntary affirmative action programs' without quotas, stated it was a great gain for affirmative action! Secretary of State of Califano, who recently cut \$800,000 from a minority work program, said "I support this nation's continuing effort to live up to its historic promise-to bring minorities and other disadvantaged groups into the mainstream of American society." Even the majority of Black "leaders" tried to convince us that using race as a 'plus' should constitute a green light to go forward with acceptable affirmative action programs" (Vernon Jordan, chairman of the National Urban League).

AN IMMEDIATE ADVERSE EFFECT

In practice the Bakke decision has had an immediate adverse effect on affirmative action programs. In Chicago, within one hour after the decision, the city attorney said he was going to closely study the decision and consider taking the city's quota affirmative action programs in the fire and police department to court. Within a week, Judge Prentice Marshall delayed his order abolishing the discriminatory promotion exams in the police department pending further study of the Bakke decision. In Atlanta's Fulton County the commissioners delayed an affirmative action program for minorities that

would have boosted the percentage of County employees to 46%, that is, equivalent to the proportion of the county minorities in the population.

Even at that the bourgeoisie is not limiting its attack on affirmative action to the courts. Twice this month in the House of Representatives amendments were passed, "prohibiting the use of federal funds to enforce any ratio, quota, or other numerical requirement related to race, sex in hiring, promotions and university admissions." (The Walker amendment attached to the HEW labor appropriations bill passed by the House June 18). But as we said, affirmative action without quotas or other means to measure performance is nothing but words on paper.

A SIGNAL TO MOVE FORWARD

The Supreme Court's Bakke decision does not in any way put an end to our struggle against the issues raised by Allan Bakke. It is a signal to push forward. Our efforts have never been directed against one law case involving a single individual or a single professional school in one state which could be resolved in one court action. Our concern has been with defending all affirmative action programs as part of widespread resistance to every attack on our democratic rights. The struggle against the Bakke decision is part of the overall struggle for democracy. We need to build a large mass movement led by the working class in order to defend what we have won against the reactionary effects of imperialist crisis and war preparations.

Militant demonstrations against the Bakke decision in major cities throughout the country were a good beginning. In most cases they showed a broader character and involved a wider spectrum of people than has previously



PROTEST AGAINST BAKKE DECISION IN LOS ANGELES (TC PHOTO)

characterized anti-Bakke actions. This is a good sign which shows the growing consciousness among very wide strata of the population to the consequences which we can expect to follow the Bakke decision.

It goes without saying that the Bakke struggle is not over. The bourgeoisie has given legal recognition to the concept of reverse discrimination and they will use the decision to step up their reactionary attack on national minorities and women. Today the chief task of the anti-Bakke movement is to unite all who can be united in support of affirmative action and the struggle for equal rights. In addition, without liquidating the specific work within the Bakke movement, we must link it up with the struggle against other attacks on democratic rights such as California's Proposition 13, the attacks on the ERA, etc. Overcoming every tendency to narrowness and passivity, and mobilizing much more broadly than we have yet done, we must build a powerful mass movement to defend against every reactionary attack on the democratic rights of the working and oppressed masses.

L.A. COURT SANCTIONS FORCED STERILIZATIONS

On June 30th a federal judge in Los Angeles ruled that involuntary sterilization carried out against Dolores Madrigal and other Chicana and Mexican women were legal. The women had been sterilized after childbirth under a publicly funded program between 1971 and 1974 at the Los Angeles County, University of Southern California Medical Center.

In all cases the women did not understand the consent forms they had signed. When sterilization was discussed with the women, it was always during labor. One woman was kept out of the delivery room until she would sign the papers. Some of the women only found out that they had been sterilized when they returned to the hospital later to get birth control pills, and they were told they wouldn't need birth control any longer. In one of the cases a woman was told her common law husband had signed the papers, but that too was a lie. In all of these cases the women had little or no knowledge of English and were not provided with papers written in Spanish or an interpreter to help.

In the written opinion, the federal judge stated that

"This case is essentially the result of a break-down in communications between the patients and doctors". Although the women all spoke Spanish, not English, he based his decision solely on the testimony of the English speaking doctors who had forced these sterilizations. Pretending sympathy for the grief caused these women, he claimed that the doctors could not be blamed for relying on consent forms in common use at the Medical Center. The right of these women to be understood was ignored.

What is exposed in this case is the national chauvinism of both the medical and judicial systems. The word of English speaking doctors that they knew the patients wanted to be sterilized is more powerful in the courts than the combined words of ten Spanish speaking women who swore they never authorized or desired to be sterilized.

STERILIZATION AND NATIONAL OPPRESSION

The struggle of the ten women who brought this law suit is part of the struggle of national minorities in the US against national oppression and

great nation chauvinism. Sterilization is forcibly carried out in oppressed minority communities - Chicano, Black, Puerto Rican and Native American - as well as throughout the third world. Among Native Americans, 35% of all women of child bearing age have been sterilized including many girls between 8 and 15 years of age.

In the face of world poverty and starvation, the bourgeoisie puts the blame on the masses of the people themselves by targeting overpopulation as the major problem causing poverty. Such institutions as publicly funded hospitals and foreign aid programs carry out this overpopulation theory and the programs of forced sterilization. A former medical student at the University of Chicago Hospital, which has a primarily black patient population, said, "Mostly we'd approach women with large families and we'd tell them this was the best solution. We would explain the world population problem."

IMPERIALIST EXPLOITATION IS THE SOURCE OF POVERTY

What is this world population problem? Former CIA Director William Colby is a clear advocate of the bourgeois view when he says, "the greatest danger of violence and difficulty in the world is between the 'haves and the have nots'....One of the most serious problems we have to face is the doubling of the population by the end of the century, which would drive an additional 20 million illegal aliens across the border into the United States."

The answer of the Carter

administration to this threat from the "have-not" nations and to high unemployment is an aid program which not only directly serves the interests of the US bourgeoisie, but ties in population control programs as part of the deal. Under the direction of such "philanthropic" institutions as the Rockefeller Foundation, sterilization programs are forced on people throughout the third world. As one intern said, "Now when I was down in Nicaragua, there we pushed. People would come in with nine children and they didn't have food and we pushed them."

Overpopulation is not the source of a low standard of living and unemployment within oppressed nationality communities in the US or in the third world. The source is the stranglehold by world imperialism - and especially the two superpowers - over the wealth and labor of the world's people.

The struggle to expose and end forced sterilization is part of the struggle to destroy the many tenacles of control that imperialism has over the lives and destinies of the world's peoples. The recent court decision must be taken to the masses of people in the workplaces and in the democratic struggles to expose the inability of the courts to provide justice and end the criminal practice of forced sterilization. The attention that has been given this trial by minority and feminist groups should be built on in broadening and strengthening the united front against imperialism to bring an end to such brutal and genocidal policies.

POST OFFICE

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

backs in public services like mail delivery are one way capital pretends to limit this growth. This does little to solve the underlying nature of the crisis, but quite a lot to pass the burden of it onto the backs of working and oppressed people.

Because postal work is labor intensive -- 86% of the postal budget goes for labor costs -- the most important way to limit postal spending is through layoffs. The USPS has already eliminated 100,000 jobs since it was established in 1970 and 60% of these cuts have been in the last three years alone.

As a result, in the current negotiations, the USPS wants the present "no layoff clause" out of the contract in order to eliminate another 100,000 jobs in the next five years. Specifically, they want to be able to lay off workers with less than 3 years seniority at any time and to be able to layoff all workers for up to 27 days a year.

The rank and file on the other hand demand that the 'no layoff' clause, which the USPS has gotten around by mandatory overtime, disciplinary actions for sick leave and accidents, post office closings, mechanization, etc., actually be enforced.

In fact, growth in mail volume should require new hires, not layoffs. As the postal budget has been cut, the USPS has tried to increase 'productivity' as they call it with speed-ups, mandatory overtime, etc. Forced overtime has been so extreme, for example, that

in the past three years overtime pay alone could have hired 55,000 additional full time workers! Under these conditions postal workers have one of the highest accident rates in the country for hours worked.

Consequently, another demand in the current negotiations is that existing safety regulations be expanded and enforced and that workers be guaranteed the right to refuse work under unsafe conditions.

Central also to the position of the USPS in the current negotiations is the demand, first launched by President Carter, that postal wage increases be limited to 5.5% with no cost of living allowance. He justifies this by spreading the bourgeois lie that higher wages cause inflation.

Today real wages are declining. Prices far outstrip wage increases. With an inflation rate of over 10%, a wage package which does not give workers that much plus a cost of living clause to protect against even greater inflation during the life of the contract is a wage cut, no matter how it is disguised!

Because of national and sex oppression, layoffs, wage cuts, and other measures tied to the effort to cut postal costs do not affect all segments of the workforce equally. This is a law of imperialism. Although the Post Office has historically been one of the largest employers of national minorities, oppressed nationality workers and women have continued to face discrimination in hiring, promotion, etc. For example, in Chicago in May, persons from the Puerto Rican community demonstrated to demand more jobs for Latinos who hold only 203 of over 16,000 postal jobs in that city. An end to workplace discrimination therefore is also an essential part of the current struggle.

Lenin said that in its struggle for power the working class has no other weapon but organization. This is true for each step in the struggle. Because the ruling class knows this, it is always one of its essential tactics to undermine the organization of the working class.

In this respect the USPS is even more rigorous than other employers in its effort to disorganize the working class, because it is directly part of the state apparatus. For example, according to the present contract, the postal service can hire casual or temporary workers for up to 180 days a year and as 10% of the workforce. Such workers are a less stable part of the workforce. With no job protection, they are forced to work more overtime for less money with no benefits. Their existence as a super-exploited sector of the postal workforce without ordinary union and employment rights undermines the organization of all postal workers. As a result, in current negotiations postal workers demand that all workers be hired on as permanent employees and the casual workforce be totally eliminated.

In addition, like other public workers, postal workers are denied the right to strike. Under federal law, it is a felony to strike against the federal govern-

ment. But trade union organization of any sort is impotent without the right to withhold labor collectively. As a result, rank and file postal workers have raised the right to strike as essential to the current negotiations.

In this respect, postal workers can play a vanguard role in the struggle for the right to strike for all workers in the public sector because of the strategic position of mail service in the economy. The massive 1970 wildcat strike was a demonstration of their power. In the first major strike against the federal government, 200,000 postal workers went out in defiance of both the state and their union's national leadership.

Also contributing to undermining postal worker organization are the bureaucrats who now control the unions.

For example, union leaders are cooperating with the USPS and the federal government to keep a blackout on the negotiations. There is nothing so sensitive in these negotiations. The issues are straightforward. Yet not daring to step outside the bounds of strict legality, the bureaucrats will not consider the strike weapon and say they are committed to settling without a strike. What this means is that negotiations are behind closed doors in order to conclude a sellout.

While the bureaucrats fear a strike, the government prepares for it. The Post Of-

fice has a 48 page manual which calls for federal troops to move the mail. The Defense Department has a secret strikebreaking plan under the codename, "Operation Graphic Hand." There are also plans to take legal action against those workers who strike.

Nevertheless, although these plans have been well-publicized to intimidate postal workers into not striking, even Postal Service officials admit that they probably could not move much mail with troops. This certainly was true in the 1970 Postal wildcat when National Guard troops sympathized with the strikers and sabotaged mail delivery.

Postal workers have learned from fights such as the 1970 wildcat that they can win gains when they take mass action, relying on their own strength instead of the bureaucrats to lead the fight against the USPS. As a result, all over the country rank and file caucuses and committees have formed to organize the fight for a better contract and to apply pressure on both the USPS and the national union leadership. The July 12 demonstrations are one example of this spirit. Only in organizing to kick out the present leadership of the postal union and replace them with class conscious leaders will postal workers be able to wage effective battle for their day to day as well as for their long range interests in the struggle against imperialist crisis.

FROM POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT TO US POSTAL SERVICE

Until August 1970, when the United States Postal Service was formed, the movement of the mail in the United States was managed directly by Congress. Well over 80% of the budget was for salaries and these nearly kept pace with private industry. But with massive military expenditures for Vietnam, pay in the Post Office began to fall behind. In 1969 Nixon froze postal salaries. In addition, pressure to cut non-military government spending led to the plan to change the postal service into a semi-private, semi-public corporation run by a Board of Governors appointed by the President.

Two key factors were behind this proposal. First the POD was too expensive. It was run at a loss with Treasury paying all the bills. Second, POD operations were labor intensive and cutting costs meant above all reducing jobs. Creating a quasi-governmental corporation allowed the federal government to remain firmly in control through a presidentially appointed Board of Governors (whose members at this time represent the Board of Directors of Exxon, AT&T, GE, Mobil, Dupont and others), but left it somewhat insulated by an independent management from public outcry to higher mailing fees, worsened job conditions, layoffs, etc.

To provide the private revenue necessary to get the scheme started the government issued high yield, guaranteed interest postal bonds. The Rockefeller and Morgan families bought these in great quantities and it was through their banks that they were sold. With state aid monopoly capital found a new source of profits and postal workers lost jobs.

SCAFFOLD COLLAPSE

CONTINUED FROM P. 6

back in the district."

In this so-called "democracy", it is not the will of the majority, the laboring and oppressed people, that is reflected in governmental decisions. Rather it is the will of a small minority, the capitalist class that actually rules.

"LESS THAN THE VALUE OF A USED BUICK"

The bitter truth is that the government bodies like OSHA have not prevented workplace fatalities and injuries, for they fail to challenge a basic contradiction of the capitalist system--the drive for maximum profits versus the safety and well being of the working masses. Punitive fines issued by an organization like OSHA after an accident merely put a price on a worker's life.

OSHA fined Research-Cottrell \$105,100. These fines were issued for ten "willful" citations and 6 "serious" violations. As Bowser of the Disaster Organization bitterly stated, this "figures out to \$2,000 per life, less than the book value of a used Buick."

A capitalist owner merely balances the cost of a worker's life against the profits gained from speed-up or not fixing unsafe machinery or equipment. Even if charges are brought against a capitalist for "criminal negligence", as the Justice Department might do in this case, the maximum penalty is six months in jail and a \$10,000 fine. Under capitalism, a worker's life sells cheaply.

This cold cash balancing of safety costs against profits exists because of capitalist ownership of the means of production. Clearly if workers were in control of the factories, mines and mills they would not allow the kind of speed up that occurred at the Willow Island site. Their self-interest would dictate

the conditions of their labor. But now it is the self-interest of the capitalists, who do not work, which dictate workplace conditions. And in this the capitalists are defended by law.

Workers have won gains when they have organized and taken direct mass action and linked their day-to-day economic struggles to the political struggle of the working class. One example was the miners' massive wildcat strike which forced the mine safety legislation in 1969. Such concessions can definitely improve working conditions.

On the other hand, such reforms do not remove the basic contradiction of capitalist ownership which causes the countless workplace fatalities. The capitalists, through their control of the state, constantly try to weaken reforms and take back the gains the workers have won. As long as they maintain state power they will continue to do so. Therefore, workers must continually fight for enforcement of safety and other reform legislation. At the same time, in order to ensure workers' health and safety, the working class must make this struggle part of preparing to take control of the state and the means of production.

Already the working class has suffered another casualty at the Willow Island plant. Early Saturday, June 10, 1978, 19 year old Douglas McMahan, an apprentice iron worker, fell 98 feet to his death. He was carrying 30 pound steel beams near the roof of a building adjacent to the half finished tower from which the 51 men fell.

These needless deaths prove the bourgeoisie is unfit to rule. Our grief must become a weapon to strengthen our resolve in the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.