

The Workers' Advocate

Supplement



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The threat of drug testing

From the July 15 issue of **Chicago Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Chicago:

Management getting high on Bodine's new drug policy

DRUG TESTING IS A THREAT TO ALL WORKERS

The new Substance Abuse Policy at Bodine Electric Company has caused a lot of concern among workers and rightly so. This policy contains a whole arsenal of things to use against the workers. And with the productivity drive going on at Bodine, with all the new Mazaks and "cells", it's

not hard to see how Bodine will be using this policy.

Chicago Workers' Voice is against drug and alcohol abuse. Drugs are harmful and dangerous. But the current crusade against drugs, at Bodine and elsewhere, is not aimed at helping workers overcome drug abuse. It is aimed at weeding out "inefficient" workers, not to mention militants, "troublemakers" or any others that the company wants to eliminate.

The new drug policy is not for rehabilitating addicts and alcoholics. It is meant to crack the whip, to intimidate the entire workforce into a

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On the split among the Kurdish bourgeois nationalists

The Communist Party of Iran, and its Kurdish organization Komala, have been fighting for the interests of the workers and toilers against the Khomeini despotism. Meanwhile the Kurdish Democratic Party has been waging a civil war in Iranian Kurdistan against Komala. The last issue of the **Supplement** carried the news that the KDP had gone into crisis and split. Here we provide more detail, by reprinting articles from the July 1-15 issue of **Report**, bi-weekly newsletter of the Communist Party of Iran--the Committee Abroad.

activities are in line with the decisions of the 8th Congress of the KDP, and the "Kurdistan Democratic Party--Revolutionary Leadership" which disagrees with the resolutions of this congress, we

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An Explanation

Due to the lack of space and our incomplete treatment of the split in the KDP in the previous issue of **Report**, there were certain shortcomings in our introduction to the news of the split in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). To provide a better description of the two factions of KDP, namely the Ghasemlou leadership of the KDP whose

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DRUG TESTING IS A THREAT TO ALL WORKERS

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more intense pace of work. And it fits right in with their job-eliminating schemes. (Apparently there haven't been enough "leavers" with the usual harassment so they will scrape up a few more with drug testing.)

Let examine the "lowlights" of this new program:

**** Any worker can be forced to take a drug test.** According to the union and the labor board, the only thing illegal is random testing. So if the company gives any reason to suspect drug or alcohol use (whether or not it's a **good** reason) a worker must take a drug test. To refuse is to risk firing.

"Reasons" include: involvement in an on-the-job accident, unsteady walk, slurred speech, lapses of concentration, emotional outbursts. So now, when a worker talks back to a foreman or opposes one of the (daily) stupid orders of management he/she faces the threat of drug testing! In fact, under this criteria anyone could be a suspected drug addict. Furthermore drug tests are often

inaccurate and race-biased. For example, dark-skinned people may give false positives for marijuana.

**** Safety first.** The Reagan administration wants to "improve" occupational safety through drug testing all the workers involved in accidents. Those that test positive can then be blamed for the accident, regardless of the circumstances. In this way, the capitalists will not be held responsible for unsafe conditions, the main cause of accidents.

If anyone believes that drug testing will be used to create a safer workplace (and Bodine is claiming this), then one should consider why the Reagan administration has stopped enforcement of occupational safety and environmental laws. In fact OSHA and the EPA have been gutted and are now so weak that they are worthless! Reagan kills OSHA and the EPA to save the capitalists from the expense of health and safety. Now Reagan will use drug tests to blame the workers and absolve the capitalists of responsibility for accidents.

Keep in mind that, with Bodine's productivity drive as with any capitalist speedup, accidents are sure to happen. Drug testing is a good smoke-screen to cover up the real causes of accidents.

**** Unwarranted search and seizure.** The company claims the right to search workers and their property (including cars if parked in the company lot). And to protest being searched is deemed "insubordination". So you can be fired for trying to claim your constitutional rights. Yes, more "freedom" from Mr. Freedom Bodine.

**** Rehabilitation for victims of drugs? -- Maybe, maybe not.** This is where the true nature of the Reaganite drug policies can be seen. Bodine will decide if workers are to be rehabilitated. Under this policy, workers could be fired for a first offense. Sure, management promises they'll look into each case, be concerned, etc. But look how Bodine treats workers in the normal day-to-day routine. How much concern should we expect from these creatures of capital and their lackeys?

Similar promises were made for federal government employees by Reagan but it turns out that funding for programs rehabilitating drug addicts was **almost completely eliminated**. This hypocrisy is typical of capitalism. Reagan swears he only wants to help the addicts, then guts the medical care of the poor, thus removing any chance for

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recovery.

At the "Management Communication" meetings it was said that this new policy is little different than the previous one, that people are not going to be searched or drug tested without very good reason, that the company is not trying to get rid of anyone, and so forth.

But if it's nothing new, why is Bodine making such a big deal out of it? And why is this policy being implemented now?

The reason is that Bodine is on a job-eliminating binge like never before. Bodine wants to get rid of people and the Substance Abuse Policy, along with the Absentee Point System, is ready-made for harassing and firing people.

Mass resistance can defeat unjust firings and stop harassment.

Like their productivity drive, Bodine's drug policy, when it leads to unjust firings and harassment, can be fought. For example, workers from Warner-Swasey are being transferred to the Mazaks with no cut in pay. This is not due to Bodine's sense of justice but to the fact that Bodine is vulnerable to job actions. Workers need to get together and discuss ways to get organized and what kind of job actions to carry out. If we are to hold our heads up, if we are to survive the attacks of Reaganism on our rights and livelihood, then we must fight back. <>

At Great Lakes Steel: STOP THE DRUG TESTING! BRING BACK EVERY WORKER FIRED FOR THE TESTS!

From the Aug. 8 issue of **Detroit Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

Over the last months Great Lakes Steel (GLS) has launched a new attack against the workers, in the form of forced drug testing. The company has already fired a large number of workers, after allegedly finding extremely minute traces of illegal drugs in their urine samples.

GLS has arrogantly declared its right to test any worker at any time by merely claiming a "probable cause" to do so. As well, the company has declared the right to fire any worker who refuses to submit to the testing.

This drug testing is an outrageous police state measure that must be STOPPED NOW! Every worker who has been fired must be returned to work IMMEDIATELY!

Intimidation to force new concessions

One of the aims of this attack is to force new concessions on us.

One local union official reports that the company has already made two demands to reopen the contract, and that drug testing and firings are linked to the company's attempt to blackmail the union into this.

The company recognizes that mass opposition from the workers would come up to block any at-

tempt to reopen the contract for more concessions. The company is trying to intimidate the workers into accepting this, and one avenue is through mass firings.

Who is being tested and fired

Both the company and union are trying to calm the workers down in the face of this vicious attack. They are telling us that the only people being forced to take the test are those with a history of drug rehabilitation, as if violating these workers' rights is OK.

The fact is the company and union are telling a lie. Many of the workers being forced to take the test have no history of drug rehabilitation. The examples of this are numerous.

One worker [last winter] was sent to First Aid for a periodic retesting for an operator's license. The attendant claimed the worker was "trembling" and that was "probable cause" enough to test. The fact is the temperature outside was a frigid 1 degree and the worker was chilled. In fact the attendant sent him back to finish his turn; he worked two more days until the test results were returned; and then he was fired. That was over six months ago.

Other workers without a history of drug rehabilitation have been innocently caught in the company's snare. Workers returning from sick leave or sick days off or simply going to First Aid

after an injury have been forced to take a drug urinalysis.

Many of these workers were fired but have protested it, claiming they were taking various medications which have confused the tests. For example, they claim they were taking Advil or Motrin, over-the-counter pain relievers containing Ibuprofen. The government's own Center for Disease Control (CDC) has noted that Ibuprofen can show a false positive for marijuana.

Any worker is at risk of a false accusation

The CDC has also stated that a series of other perfectly legal drugs, skin pigmentation, and even food can confuse the testing procedures.

Nuprin, Motrin and Mydol all contain Ibuprofen. Nyquil, Vicks nasal spray, and Neosynephren can show positive as amphetamines. Tylenol with codeine (a prescription drug) and poppy seeds can show positive for opium derivatives. Even melanin, the chemical in skin pigmentation, can show positive for marijuana.

In other words, workers taking the above drugs or having dark skin or who eat poppy seed rolls run the risk of losing their jobs.

The company is trying to suppress struggle

Hanging the threat of drug testing and firing over the heads of the workers is a good way to intimidate workers into accepting unsafe working conditions and job combination. Workers already report having the threat of being sent down for testing issued against them when they have raised safety issues.

At the same time workers are refusing to report injuries out of fear of being forced to submit to testing.

Attrition through mass firings

Another reason for the firings is to slash the

workforce even more. After all, firing is a lot cheaper than giving hundreds of retirement age workers the \$400 bonus that was promised them in 1986.

Militant mass struggle is the way to stop the testing and firings

Many workers are complaining that the union is doing little to stop the testing or win back the jobs of the fired workers. Mimi Rinna, the international union representative, has even stated that out of some 30 drug related firings the union has won only 1 arbitration case.

To beat back this company attack and to defeat their concessions drive we workers must look back to the militant traditions of the late 1940's and 1950's. It was during that period when the workers at GLS and throughout the steel industry waged militant struggles, even wildcat strikes, to defend their interests.

Unfortunately this is not the stand of the new officials in the local union. In the first issue of the new paper put out by Local 1299, Steve Mas-singill, the new president, has assured the company that the new administration will be quite tame. In his opening editorial he stated very plainly:

"We (union officials) are not in the plant to initiate or instigate work stop-pages or slowdowns."

In other words, the new administration is not about to get caught organizing the kind of militant struggles our fathers waged and that are necessary today to defend our interests.

It was through the militant struggles of the '40's and '50's that gains were won. Gains that the union bureaucrats are giving back under the "cooperative partnership".

If we rank-and-file workers are going to defend our interests we must organize mass militant struggle, independently of those bureaucrats who do not want to. <>

**News from the Communist Party of Iran:
ON THE SPLIT AMONG THE KURDISH BOURGEOIS NATIONALISTS**

Continued from the front page

outline the stands taken by both factions on the recent communique of the Central Committee of Komala about the termination of the internal war in Kurdistan and the implementation of a cease-fire between Komala and both factions of KDP. (This communique is published as a supplement to this issue of **Report**. [It is reprinted below in this issue of the **Supplement**.])

The KDP faction adhering to the results of the 8th Congress (Ghasemlou faction) has not accepted the unconditional cease-fire set by Komala and still insists on its policy of continuing the war against Komala. The KDP-RL has announced its acceptance of a cease-fire with Komala.

We [will] try to give more information and news about this split and further changes within these two factions in the future issues of **Report**.

About the Stand of the Ghasemlou Faction of KDP towards the Communique of the CC of Komala on the Question of Cease-fire and the Termination of Hostilities

As we brought to the attention of our readers in the previous issue of **Report**, the Central Committee (CC) of Komala has announced on its part the termination of hostilities with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The full text of Komala's communique of 23rd April 88 is published as a supplement to this issue. Below we outline the stand of both factions of KDP towards this communique.

KDP, the party of the bourgeoisie in Iranian Kurdistan, has recently split into two distinct factions. The split happened after KDP's 8th Congress held last January. A faction of KDP is still loyal to its General Secretary, Ghasemlou, and the other faction is rallied under a number of leading cadres of KDP. Ghasemlou's faction has [held onto] the name KDP whilst the other faction calls itself "KDP--Revolutionary Leadership". Both factions of the KDP have made their positions clear. The Ghasemlou faction rejected a cease-fire with Komala while the KDP-RL has accepted it.

The Ghasemlou clique made their stand clear through a couple of radio programs. In these programs, broadcast on 6th May, the Ghasemlou clique attacked the KDP-RL on its stand towards this communique and severely reproached the KDP-RL faction for its acceptance of Komala's cease-

fire. In its radio program, KDP mentioned the names of a few leading members of KDP-RL who were previously among the stalwart advocates of the continuation of war with Komala, ridiculed them for their present change of heart, and then treated them [to] a volley of insults and accusations.

The Radio Voice of Revolution--Komala's radio--in its broadcasts of 8th and 22nd May took up this issue and commented that these provocative treatments made by one faction of KDP against the leading members of the other faction, i.e., against those who were a while ago in the same party with them, proves starkly the bourgeois character of this party. Since it is one of the inherent characteristics of bourgeois parties to allow one faction to resort to all kinds of accusations and slanders in order to save its own position and prestige at the expense of another faction's disgrace and ouster.

Komala's radio also declared that, despite the previous stand of the KDP-RL towards war with Komala, it welcomes the present attitude of this faction as a positive step forward, whilst the stand of Ghasemlou clique is a clear indication of its policy of continuing the war with Komala and its stern anti-communist nature.

**The Communique
of the Central Committee of Komala about:**

**The present situation
of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)
and the termination of the internal war
in Kurdistan**

**Workers and toilers!
Militant people of Kurdistan!**

The KDP split up as a result of its political crisis and political deadlock. Now, confusion has entangled different sections of this party. The conflicts between and disclosures among the factions and groupings within this party clearly reveal the present political situation and nature of KDP before the people. Today the depth of decadence, lack of perspective and political bankruptcy of the KDP has come out more clearly than any other time.

However, contrary to what both the conflicting factions claim, the present situation and the deep crisis in which the KDP finds itself is not a new

phenomenon rooted in its 8th Congress, not the result of the careerism of one and the intrigues of the other, or the totalitarianism of one and the unprincipled actions of the other faction, etc. The fate of parties and political forces, before anything else, is determined by their objective position in the struggle of classes within society. KDP's crisis and deadlock is basically a reflection of the reality that the Kurdish workers and toilers have come forth with their demands under their own banner, with their own party, and have become the motive force of the movement in Kurdistan. KDP's crisis is the reflection of the reality that the working class under capitalist relations has assumed such a social and political weight that makes it the pillar of every social upheaval. Traditional backwardness and reactionary superstitions and prejudices vanish in the face of the presence and development of the vanguard class, and all those parties and currents which are defined by and dependent on these backwardnesses become isolated and disintegrate. To the degree that the working and toiling masses have become more and more politically minded and have taken up the democratic and socialist slogans of the working class in Kurdistan, the KDP has followed the descending path of isolation and disintegration. The KDP as a party of Kurdish society's past, as a current neither able to understand the new problematics of the movement and society nor able to answer and provide solutions to these problems, was isolated and crisis-stricken.

The KDP denied and resisted the changing reality of Kurdish society. It did not accept that today's Kurdistan, i.e., workers' and toilers' Kurdistan and its movement, belongs to the workers and toilers. It even denied the presence of the working class in Kurdistan and confronted the Kurdish workers and toilers, confronted their demands and aims, and eventually confronted their political party and it now pays the price of this short-sightedness and stubbornness.

It was in response to such a political isolation and deadlock that the KDP began an organized armed attack against Komala units and Peshmargas [militant fighters--Report] on 16 Nov. 1984. This armed conspiracy against Komala was not the first act of its kind committed by the KDP. The difference this time was that the KDP started an all-out war against Komala. The KDP leadership imagined that it could slow down the advances made by the vanguard class and its party by armed means, and at the same time slow down its own process of disintegration and isolation. The KDP entered into war with Komala aiming to limit free communist activity in Kurdistan and harass the Kurdish workers and toilers. During all this period it went beyond its military capacity against Komala

and resorted to such means as religion, narrow-minded nationalism, backward morals about women, etc., in an attempt to gain material backing for itself within the reactionary strata of Kurdistan by military offensive against Komala. But the hard, changed realities of Kurdish society and the mass base of Komala among the awakened Kurdish workers and toilers, day by day proved the futility of the attempts of this party to its leaders. The war between the KDP and Komala, the KDP's political and propaganda confusions and despair showed the nature of this party, in a living political experience, to the people and especially the toilers of Kurdistan.

Time after time we have asked the KDP to refrain from an aggressive offensive against Kurdish workers and toilers and those forces who have raised the banner of the workers' cause in Kurdistan and won their support and sympathy. We have asked the KDP on many occasions to respect democracy in Kurdistan and the conditions of free activity of workers and political parties. We warned the KDP that it cannot force Komala, with armed aggression, to compromise on its policies and aims. We have warned the KDP that these attempts yield nothing but the weakening of the struggle of the Kurdish masses against the Islamic Republic regime and the political isolation and loss of credibility of the KDP itself. The successive military defeats of the KDP against Komala and its split and crisis today only proves the legitimacy of our warnings and judgements about it.

Komala stood firm against the reactionary war policy of the KDP. Our aim was to show the KDP the futility of this policy and provide conditions in which our forces would be able to, without any hindrance from the KDP, carry out their principled aim, i.e., fight against the reactionary Islamic Republic regime. Today, the KDP has reached a stage, from the point of view of its practical abilities, that it is not longer capable of seriously hindering Komala's work. Thus, since our aim is not taking revenge from the KDP, but to achieve a situation where democracy in Kurdistan is maintained for carrying out consciousness-raising work among the working class and where the basic rights of the working people and the freedom of political organizations and parties for activity is not violated, and also with respect to the interests of the revolutionary movement of the Kurdish people against the Islamic Republic regime, we, on our part, hereby declare a cease-fire and the termination of conflict with both factions of the KDP.

Furthermore, the "Kurdistan Democratic Party--Revolutionary Leadership" has recently, in a communique, declared a cease-fire on its part. We

regard this [as] as positive step. The declaration of an end to the war from both sides provides conditions under which both parties [Komala and the KDP--**Report**] can regulate their relations in a peaceful way in an atmosphere of understanding, and on the basis of democratic principles.

Our policy of declaring cease-fire, on our part, is in accordance with Komala's responsibility towards the revolutionary movement of the Kurdish people and considering the interests of the general struggle against the Islamic Republic regime. We state that as long as any of the KDP currents has not taken up arms against Komala and has not by

force of arms hindered the political organization and activity of Kurdish workers and toilers, Komala will not resort to arms against it. At the same time we ask that section of the KDP which follows the decisions of the 8th Congress and still insists on the continuation of war against Komala, not to resist the wishes of the people any longer and accept an end to the war and the principle of democracy.

The Central Committee of the Kurdistan Organization of the CPI--Komala

23 April 1988<>

POSTAL MANAGEMENT AND UNION LEADERSHIP HAND IN HAND IN IMPOSING OVERWORK

The articles below are from the July 12 issue of **New York Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-NY:

ROUTE MANAGEMENT MEANS SPEED UP AND OVERWORK

Postal management has been carrying out route tests (or route "management", route reviews, or inspections--whatever name you go by) at FDR Station. And they picked a good time for it too: during June, one of the lightest months of the year in terms of mail volume, management can hope to establish a quicker delivery time for the ends being tested. Come the Fall, or Christmas season, management will still be "wondering" (actually, harassing carriers) as to why delivery is taking "so long", since the tests showed it could be done quicker.

Management claims (and the union stewards "confirm") that the purpose of the current testing is to ensure a "fair" distribution of the delivery ends, so that carriers (specifically, night routers) who **are not** on the Overtime Desired List will not get delivery assignments requiring overtime whenever carriers who **are** on the list are sent home without overtime. In fact the union filed a grievance over the issue, and supposedly the route tests stem from this.

But this is so much baloney! It isn't lack of information about the various delivery ends which

is keeping management from observing the contract! Rather, management has always figured on using either subs or carriers who prefer going home on time for the longer delivery ends. This way, they hope, the carriers themselves will take care of minimizing overtime.

Moreover, why is this information being gathered in June, and without notifying the carriers in advance? Today management breaks the Overtime Desired List contract regulations, claiming they "don't know" which ends require overtime. In the future, using the current tests, they will claim that many of the auxiliary ends really don't require overtime. Either way, they will have their excuse for sending the OT list carriers home while other carriers are still out on delivery. No difference. Except this time they will have the union leadership's approval! And they will have one more weapon in their arsenal to pressure carriers to speed up the delivery. <>

UNION BUREAUCRATS HELP MANAGEMENT IMPOSE GIVEBACKS ON WORKERS

It is notable that the NALC [National Association of Letter Carriers] union stewards at FDR Station have **defended** the current program of route "management". Rather than announcing it to the work force so they could be prepared, they have kept quiet and waited until carriers came to

them. Rather than argue with management, they have "explained" to carriers why management is supposedly right. Rather than arousing the opposition of the rank and file, they have spent their energies trying to convince carriers that the "route management" is being done in their best interest.

But nobody should think the FDR shop stewards are making a deal behind the backs of the local and national leadership of the NALC. No! They are following the lead of their union leadership. Over the years, the leadership of the carriers' union itself has gradually and quietly been giving management concessions on the issue of route testing.

"Official" route tests (or inspections, as they are called in the contract and the various manuals) are [or used to be] fairly involved procedures: an entire week is required; carriers schedules have to be changed during this week; instruction and test runs have to be carried out beforehand, etc. They also call for a number of provisions which are favorable to the carriers: for example, carriers have to be notified of the test well in advance. Also, the inspections may not be carried out during the light summer months (June through August). In addition, all of the route's mail for each day of the test week has to be delivered on that particular day. And so on.

Under the **pretext** of simplifying the procedure, new elements were slipped into the contract in recent years. These serve as loopholes to evade some of the provisions management considers favorable to the carriers. Thus, in the 1984 contract they introduced the concept of route "reviews". And in the 1987 contract there is a new memorandum which calls for creating a task force "to study the manner in which letter carrier assignments are designed, evaluated and compensated, and to recommend changes and improvements."

Neither in 1984 nor during the last contract struggle in 1987 did the NALC leadership call these "givebacks". In fact, in 1987, they even boasted about "new language on route testing", as if this was something favorable. However, current practice at FDR Station shows that, in fact, at least one of the "tasks" of this new task force is to create more loopholes for management.

The NALC leadership's stand is to let management have it **their** way on route testing (and productivity in general). It should surprise no one that the stewards at FDR play a similar tune.

Management intends to use the current route testing to pressure carriers into shortening the

delivery times. Already, management has used the tests in this way against the regular carriers on some routes.

Carriers need to stand up to management. But it is clear that they will get no help from the union leadership on this. Any resistance to management's attempts at speeding up the work will have to be organized by the carriers themselves, independently of the union leadership. <>

POSTAL SERVICE PUNISHES FDR CARRIERS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF THEFT

During the past few months letter carriers in Manhattan have been plagued by a rash of registered mail thefts. Business carriers from FDR have been particularly hard hit. Recently, one carrier was injured trying to stop a theft.

And how does postal management respond? By blaming the workers, of course! This, after all, is rule number one of postal management. There is no stupidity of management so big it can't be covered up, given enough write-ups and suspensions. Or so they think.

The rash of registered mail thefts is the direct result of management policy. On the one hand, management bends over backwards to provide businesses with special services at low cost. On the other hand, management cracks the whip over the workers to cut costs.

The result is that dozens of carriers leave FDR on their afternoon trips with double-end-filled bags packed with registered valuables (in many cases, only valuables). Overburdened carriers hauling thousands of dollars worth of merchandise and checks in flimsy bags without so much as a strap to close them make easy prey for professional thieves. Any rational person could see there is something wrong with this picture. But for postal management, it is just business as usual.

The jewelry and other businesses could use bonded couriers to carry their merchandise--but this would cost money. Postal management could lay on special truck runs for registered mail for the whole area, like they do already for a few big outfits like Tiffany's. But this would cost the Postal Corporation money. So into the carriers' bags the valuables go. The businesses are happy--they are getting service from letter carriers that would cost an arm and a leg from a private service. Postal management is happy--it is collecting the registration and insurance fees. Meanwhile, carriers get hit with write-ups and suspensions. <>

**NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT CONTRACT:
GIVEBACKS CAST AS VICTORIES**

From the July 19 issue of **New York Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-NY:

New Contract Details = New Givebacks

Only last month the TWU misleaders were boasting about how they were providing us with "full information" on the new contract. Since its ratification, however, previously hidden details have come out. Needless to say, these hidden details concern givebacks. This is further proof that the TWU [leadership] holds sway over transit workers only by all sorts of lies and trickery.

The new information concerns the Sick Abuse List and the Employee Rights Clause. Both contract provisions are much worse than described in TWU literature and at meetings prior to the contract vote. Far from improving working conditions, they represent another step along the giveback path.

New Tricks in the Sick Abuse List

The new contract gives TA management wide discretion to impose sick abuse provisions on almost all workers. Here's the relevant text of the contract on "Sick Leave Control":

"An employee with less than one half of his possible sick leave balance in the bank having a recent pattern of one or two day absences will be counseled by his/her supervisor. The employee will be advised and instructed to improve his/her sick leave record. Should such patterned absences continue, the employee will be placed on the Sick Leave Control List." (our emphasis--NYWV)

In other words, here is an ideal and completely discretionary management harassment tool. Transit workers are, by contract, allotted 12 sick days a year. But you dare not use them for brief viruses, colds, infections, etc. or you run afoul of the TA's dreaded "patterned absences" and the Sick Leave Control List. So transit workers again will be forced to come to work ill, making the work even more hazardous for all.

The 1988 contract formula of 6 absences in a year without lines [doctor's notes] is bad enough. But, we thought, it is a concrete formula that could only be imposed under certain conditions. In contrast, this newly revealed provision is purposely

vague. Too many Mondays. Too many Fridays. A superintendent on your case. All these could set you up for the Sick Abuse List, even if you have doctor's lines; what counts is how many days you have banked and whether there is a "pattern" to your sick days. And who determines if there is a "pattern"? Guess!!....

Once on the abuse list, a variety of penalties apply. Of course, you must have lines for all sicknesses. Beyond this, a worker who fails to get off the list "may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action." And all new workers will lose their first sick day, lines or no.

Our sick time should be ours to use or save as we see fit. But, apparently, neither the TA nor the union bureaucrats believe this. Of course, it's natural that management would want each of us to retire with 200 days in the bank, returning a year's worth of salary to the TA. But it is a revealing commentary about Sonny Hall & co. [union bureaucrats] that only months after the arbitrator threw out the abuse list, the union honchos gave back to the TA all it had ever claimed--and much, much more!

The Employees (Have No) Rights Clause

This "unprecedented victory" (boasted Hall) is a complete fraud. Here is how it works: If your foreman or D.S. is harassing you, your TWU divisional vice president writes a letter to the TA's division V.P., notifying him of your problem. Then, after 30 days, he writes a letter to the TA Vice President for Labor Relations. And then, that's it!

This is something out of Alice in Wonderland. After all, the disciplinary actions, the write-ups, the harassment, etc. are all encouraged from Jay Street. Now, suddenly, we are expected to believe that the TA's Labor Relations V.P. will feel remorse and rein in his exuberant protégés?

In fact, we do need Employee Rights. We need the right to refuse unsafe or out-of-title work. We need real protection against harassment and speed-up. But the kind of "deals" the TA and TWU bureaucrats work out have nothing to do with this. Only the action of rank-and-file transit workers can put an end to the TA's disciplinary and speed-up campaigns. Getting organized independently of the TWU bureaucracy is the way to fight back against the TA. <>

**What to do about the situation facing the Boston Transit workers:
PARLIAMENTARY CRETINISM AND BEGGING DUKAKIS,
OR STRUGGLE**

The articles below are from the July 24 issue of **Boston Worker**, voice of the MLP-Boston:

HOW ROMANO "FIGHTS" MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

The conditions of the T workers are getting worse every day. The number of part-time workers is growing. And for the full-timers, the scheduled workdays are getting longer, while the cutbacks on cover crews mean that forced overtime is more and more often thrown in as well. Most recently an intense wave of harassment, arbitrary discipline, suspensions, and firings has swept over workers system-wide. It seems that in the midst of contract negotiations, the capitalist managers of the MBTA are determined to intimidate the workers into silence.

But there is a growing anger against the management rights offensive and the workers are seeking ways to fight back. Last month militant T workers circulated a proposal for a workers' demonstration at the State House to denounce management rights and Dukakis' fraud of being pro-worker. There was widespread support for this idea among the workers.

But the union leaders do not share the fighting spirit of the rank-and-file. They have refused to inform the workers about the [Transit] Authority's demands in the new contract and they went looney against the proposal of the militant workers for a demonstration. In fact they threatened to throw one of the militant workers out of the union for circulating it.

Instead of standing up and fighting back, Romano [union leader] and company are telling the workers to go down on their knees. They are circulating a whining letter to Dukakis begging him for help. They claim that if enough workers sign it, Dukakis will side with the workers against the bankers and businessmen who pull the strings of the Authority. And maybe cows will start to fly.

For those workers who cannot stomach this groveling letter, Romano has another alternative to the mass struggle: "The state legislature will save us". He has made a splash lately with his lobbying on *Beacon Hill*. A couple of politicians have agreed to consider a bill that contains some slight reforms in the management rights law, Chapter 581.

Now this bill does not have a snowball's chance in hell of becoming law, but what if it did? What does this bill do? Does it abolish the management rights law? Does it reinstate the rights and working conditions taken from the workers since 1980? Does it repeal the no-strike laws aimed at the MBTA workers?

No, it simply asks the state government to allow the union to negotiate and arbitrate on certain issues that the Authority now can decree unilaterally. But this will not improve the workers' situation one iota because the first point of Chapter 581 is that any arbitrator must take into account on any question the "right" of the Authority to cut costs! Only a complete scrapping of the management rights laws and the no-strike laws would open up any space for the T workers. But for this to happen the workers will have to build up a very militant and sustained struggle which must include defying the laws of the rich.

The truth is that while Romano is running around promoting Dukakis and the legislature as the savior of the T workers, the parasites on Beacon Hill [the legislature] are preparing for a new round of attacks against the T workers!

The 1989 budget, which Dukakis has signed before heading off to Atlanta to be crowned by the Democratic Party, calls for a \$13.4 million cut in state spending for the MBTA operating budget. As the economic downturn hits Massachusetts and the state runs into fiscal problems, Dukakis wants to show the rich that he can be a "tough" administrator, so he is calling for cutbacks in social services such as mass transit.

And it seems clear that this cutback is only the beginning. The budget is based on a very rosy forecast of the future economic situation, which may help Dukakis to slide by until the November election, but which will certainly mean a new round of cutbacks soon after. Of course they will not cut this money from O'Leary's [transit management's] bloated bureaucracy or the millions in interest payments to the banks (see the article below entitled "Where have the 'savings' from management rights gone?"). No, they will try to take it out of the hides of the T workers and through increased fares.

Why hasn't Romano told the workers about this? Can it be that with all his slumming on Beacon Hill and his high-priced lobbyists, he hasn't

heard of this new attack brewing against the workers?

No, the union leaders are purposely covering this up to make it easier for Dukakis to keep the confidence of the rich during his run for the White House. If the T workers are to really fight management rights they must organize independently of the sell-out union officials and launch a straight-up fight against the Authority and the Dukakis administration. <>

HOW FAR CAN YOU TRUST ROMANO?

Three months ago Tony Romano and the executive board [of the union] promised the workers that they would allow them to vote on what to do about the contract before sending it to arbitration. This promise of course was made under pressure.

But now three months later when he thinks the workers have forgotten, Tony is singing a different tune. Now we are told that the workers will not be allowed to vote until after the contract has been sent to binding arbitration.

In other words, after the dirty deed is done. After the presidential elections are over. When it is too late to do anything but accept the concessions the arbitrator dishes out. <>

WHERE HAVE THE "SAVINGS" FROM MANAGEMENT RIGHTS GONE

In 1980 when the Authority was in a fiscal crisis, the capitalist managers were screaming for takebacks from the MBTA workers. The MBTA was being hit with cutbacks in federal transit money and with Prop. 2 1/2, which limited the amount local towns paid to support the system. The Authority claimed that the only salvation for the T was to cut the pay and the "wasteful workrules" of the T workers. The politicians on Beacon Hill couldn't have agreed more, so they passed Management Rights Law 581 with a lot of fanfare. Every T worker knows the result--a constant deterioration in the conditions of the workers.

O'Leary loves to crow about the money "saved" from management rights. He never tires of claiming that \$6-10 million has been saved from the part-time system alone.

But while the workers are forced to try and make ends meet on 30 hours pay (for 40-50 hour weeks) and no health insurance, where has this "savings" actually gone? It has gone into the pockets of the bankers and the MBTA capitalist managers.

Since the early 70's the Authority has been using a system of financing called deficit spending. The way this works is that the T managers spend

their budget first and then afterwards they come to the state government to get reimbursed. Thus the money needed for the day-to-day operation of the system must be borrowed. To raise the money the MTA issues high interest, short-term bonds, which are bought by bankers and other financiers. So at the end of the year the state government must not only pay back to the Authority the money used to operate the system, but also the interest paid to the bankers.

The interest payments have grown enormously since 1980. For 1989 the T will pay out \$35 million in interest for these loans alone! This system of financing is completely unnecessary; the T could easily operate on a system of funds set aside during the year. But the T managers and the state house politicians keep this system because it allows them to dish out millions to their banker friends.

And of course the capitalist managers have profited from the takeback "savings" as well. Since 1974 the MBTA bureaucracy has grown fourfold!

This is one more example of the capitalist system making the workers pay for everything while the wealthy get richer without lifting a finger.

Why should we continue to sacrifice for the rich? To hell with "Management Rights"! Full-time pay and full benefits for all workers. Let the bankers pay for their "fiscal crisis"! <>

NO TO FORCED OVERTIME!

Forced overtime is becoming a hot issue for the MBTA workers. As if 10-11 hour days and convoluted schedules are not enough, bus drivers from several barns, as well as workers on the Green and Red lines, are reporting a growing problem of being ordered to do additional trips. This not only creates big problems in the life of the T workers, but it also creates many unsafe situations where tired motormen and drivers are sent out to carry passengers.

Of course the Authority has always claimed the right to force workers to continue after their scheduled hours, but the situation is getting worse. For one thing the capitalist T managers have been wreaking havoc with the scheduling over the last couple of years as they try to get more work out of each worker. This has led to a big increase in the amount of deadheading and swing-ons and a lengthening of the working day for most workers. At the same time they have cut the number of cover crews, which means that when the system runs behind or someone calls in sick, the Authority tries to force the workers to clean up the mess for them. Once again the MBTA is looking for

"savings" (in other words, profits) from the suffering of the workers.

There is growing resentment against this problem and many workers are trying to resist this encroachment on their already limited personal time. But whenever individual workers have taken a stand and refused to do the extra work, the Authority has come down hard with suspensions and firings. In fact, even a hint of defiance sends the supervisors into a frenzy. A couple of weeks ago a motorman on the Red line was ordered to do extra trips during his break time. Since he had something to do during that time he refused. **Even though there was a cover crew present at the station, which took up the next train with no resulting scheduling problems, a Red line supervisor had the motorman put on indefinite suspension!** It is clear that the Authority will not

be satisfied until the workers are completely docile slaves!

Workers who refuse forced overtime deserve support by their fellow workers, but it will take more than individual actions to stop the spread of forced overtime. To do this a united action, such as a mass refusal to do overtime or some other mass action is needed.

But where are the union leaders?

Despite countless requests for help and grievances, Romano and company do nothing. It is up to the rank-and-file militants to organize this struggle.

Demand the end of forced overtime!

Reinstate the cover crews and shorten the working day for drivers, motormen, and guards!

Reinstate the workers suspended for refusing forced overtime! <>

**CORRESPONDENCE:
ON JESSE JACKSON**

July 16, 1988

Workers' Freedom Bulletin

Political Statement

Now that Michael Dukakis has picked his running mate, Lloyd Bentsen, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and his top political consultants and aides are angry and upset. Angry at the way that Jackson found out about the choice of Bentsen. Angry that Rev. Jackson did not get selected by Dukakis as his choice for a vice-presidential running mate.

To be sure, many Americans--especially Black and other laboring people--voted for Rev. Jackson and supported his campaign because they identified him with their vision and hope for change in America and the world. With the support he received in major Democratic Party primaries, most of his voting supporters expected or wanted him to be treated fairly and given a chance at the vice-presidential nomination.

America is the most racist nation on the face of the earth. It is more racist than Israel or South Africa because it has allowed and used reforms and integration to try and hide its criminal essence. These tools have also been used to co-opt and develop a loyal middle class base of support for racist Americanism. The illusion of

America becoming a just society, without being fundamentally changed, is still believed by many.

Millions of people now vote and are interested in politics. Their political options, for the most part, have different forms or styles, but the essence is the same. The Democrats and the Republican parties, despite the words or the platforms of any particular candidate--including Rev. Jackson--stand and act for the preservation of 'free enterprise' US imperialist capitalism. As long as this system continues to function, workers and toiling people both in the US and abroad will suffer and not be able to live and create to their fullest potential. Working within the confines of the two party system, relying upon the lesser of two evils, does not lead to the goal of freedom.

The time to move forward is upon us. The time to learn from the 1984 and 1988 political campaigns is here. An opportunity has been created that encourages debate and work for charting an independent course for change and human progress, progress free of the conservatism and profit-driven madness of capitalism.

Don't go down with the two party, capitalist ship! The charade has begun to unravel. A working class alternative is possible. Let us move forward and build it!

[From Greensboro, North Carolina]<>

**CORRESPONDENCE:
ON BANK FAILURES AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION**

The following comment was submitted by a comrade from New York:

Last month the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, an arm of the government, bailed out two California banks to the tune of over \$1 billion. And in a less publicized transaction, it sold 8 failed Texas banks, providing a subsidy of \$2.3 billion in order to find a buyer. (*New York Times*, June 22, page D10)

However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. In the next few years, it is estimated that between 200 and 1,000 more banks will be closed. The total cost of this subsidy to bank owners, big depositors and corporate borrowers may be as high as \$80 billion. (*New York Times*, June 23) This cost is deemed "too large" to be paid by the rest of the banking center. Virtually every politician, banker and economist now says the tab will be picked up by the taxpayer. This is just another example of how the Reagan "revolution" has redistributed wealth from the workers to the rich.

How did this massive debt build up? And why do we call it a "subsidy" for the rich?

The answer lies in the origin and development of the government's "deposit insurance" programs as well as banking regulations. Until the 1930's there was virtually no regulations on the activities and lending policies of banks. And there was no "guarantee" of the security of savings. If a bank "failed" (went bankrupt), depositors lost all or part of their savings. Thus, any threat of bankruptcy would send depositors rushing to withdraw their money--this is called a run--before the bank closed its doors for good.

In the boom years of the 1920's, banks had made more and more wildly speculative loans. When the Depression started, many of these loans went bad, and so did the banks that held these loans. As the number of bank failures increased, so did people's fear of the safety of their savings. "Runs" increased, often on banks that were still solvent. To pay off nervous depositors, banks were forced to call in loans they had made, throwing the economy into even deeper depression. And then this would further increase fears about the banking system... It was a vicious cycle. More and more the economy was spiraling downward. A real possibility emerged that the entire banking system would collapse. Few remember

today how close the economy came to a complete shutdown. Capitalism was proving itself not only disastrous to the working people, but even unable to preserve itself as an economic system.

To save capitalism, the government stepped in. First, it agreed to guarantee all deposits up to a certain amount. (Today this limit is \$100,000. In practice, however, virtually all deposits, no matter how big, have been paid off.) Second, the capitalists turned to partial state management of the economy. Regulations were imposed and lending activities were restricted. This was not done because the government was "anti-bank". On the contrary, it was clear to the biggest and most clear-headed capitalists that this policing was necessary to keep the "weak sisters" from dragging down the whole banking system. (Note the great story Roosevelt told about saving the drowning gentlemen. At first he was very thankful, but in later years he couldn't stop complaining about losing his top hat.)

For over 30 years, this system served capitalism well. Increased regulation meant fewer failures. And when banks were closed, depositors were paid off from funds built up from insurance premiums paid by the banks for this purpose. Of course, these premium costs were passed on to depositors, but during the boom post-war years it was so easy for banks to make profits, that the overall costs were not so great as to attract much attention. However, the last 10 years have been a different story.

As the economy slowed in the early 1970's, banks had to turn to more speculative fields to continue increasing their profits. This meant massive high interest loans (later to prove uncollectible) to "third world" countries; high yield, high risk "junk bonds"; speculative real estate ventures; increasing consumer debt to overloaded individuals. To facilitate these activities, bank regulators turned an increasingly blind eye to this crap shoot. Indeed, the government purposely eased regulations for Savings and Loan banks, which traditionally had only made home mortgage loans, to allow them to enter this speculative frenzy. For example, it eased accounting practices so that banks would not have to declare and write off bad loans. And it almost doubled the maximum amount a bank could lend, decreasing the capital requirement--the "safety net" against bad loans. Naturally, this has increased the number of bank failures.

But the government does not close failed banks immediately. Bending over backwards to the principle of help the capitalist at all costs, it allows bankrupt banks to continue to operate, to "straighten themselves out". In fact, however, a bank in this position must turn to even more speculative activities in an attempt to make big profits. Almost invariably, this means even greater losses.

But this is more than just a case of bank mismanagement. A whole, highly profitable industry has arisen around the knowledge that come hell or high water the government guarantees all deposits up to \$100,000.

Here is how it works. An individual capitalist buys a small one-branch bank for perhaps a million or two dollars. A bank with primarily neighborhood depositors and mortgage loans suddenly goes big time. This increases the yields on its certificates of deposit, and hundreds of millions of dollars pour in, all packaged in \$90,000 chunks to stay within the government's insurance limit. (Many brokerage houses have special programs to find these high-yield, no-risk situations for their clients.) To pay the higher rates, the bank invests in high-risk, speculative ventures.

For a few years, all goes well. Because of a loophole in banking regulations, a bank can increase assets--the amount "borrowed" from depositors and then lent out--without having to increase its capital base for a few years. Thus, as assets increase, the return on the original investment skyrockets. Within a few years the owner, who is paying himself hefty dividends and a big salary, has made back his investment a dozen times over. He is not concerned (nor are his depositors) about the hundreds of millions of dollars of defaulted loans that are beginning to develop. They know that the government will eventually step in and pay back all depositors in full. All he will "lose" is his original million dollar investment.

This is the story behind both closed banks [mentioned at the very start] although, in one case, the owner made additional profits through dubious loans to another company he owned. All the rich get richer at the expense of the working class taxpayer. Eventually, the cost of bailing out the hundreds of failing banks will be added to the national debt.

What conclusion can be drawn from this gigantic redistribution of wealth from the workers to

the bankers? That better regulation is needed?

But regulations were actually relaxed to increase profitability. The regulators and bank examiners themselves--by and large former bank officials simply passing through government on their way back to more prestigious banking posts--knew exactly what was going on and chose to rubber stamp it. And today with the total tab skyrocketing there is discussion of how high the bill will go and when the government will officially pick up the cost, but none of making the banks pay or even of curtailing the most flagrant banking practices. So long as there are profits that can be made, it is inevitable that loopholes will be found and ripoffs of the workers' wealth will continue.

The irony is that while the capitalists tout their system as "efficient", in fact the mad pursuit of profits has led to a system where capital is simply funneled into a few rich people's pockets. Only socialism, by eliminating banking for profit, will end the redistribution of wealth to the rich. Only socialism will use capital to develop the economy and not simply enrich a privileged few. <>

Comment by the Supplement:

The above letter describes the huge profits being made by the rich even as the banking system goes into crisis, with more bank failures than anytime since the Great Depression. It points out the rampant speculation of the supposedly "sober" bankers.

The crisis of the banking system is, ultimately, a reflection of the decay of the economic system overall. In one way or another, this decay reflects itself in banking as well as production. The banking crisis is another indication of the rotten basis underneath the present economic recovery, a recovery during which the workers continue to be squeezed and during which the conditions of another crash are maturing. Speculation is one symptom of this and of the parasitism of American capitalism.

As well, the letter points to the role of deposit insurance in bailing out the bank owners and the big depositors. Of course, deposit insurance is also of interest to small depositors. But here as everywhere in capitalism, it is the interests of the rich that are paramount to the regulators. <>

**CORRESPONDENCE:
ON THE LITERARY DEBATE**

July 1988

Hullo!

Concerning the literary debate:

I have been following this from its beginning since it does bear on the fundamental problems facing Marxism-Leninism.

First of all, it must be pointed out that the dissident line does contain a germ of relevant criticism. "Discontented" claims there is no "full theory" of literature on the part of Marxism-Leninism. This is rubbish. It does, however, beg the questions: Does the MLP have a vanguard perspective on the problem of culture in the USA?

By this I do not mean the more advanced perspective (or, at least, not merely this), but rather that sort of perspective which would be incumbent given objective conditions and subjective demands.

So far most of the debate has been in terms of the legitimation of different categories of literature. The anti-party line says Redwing stifles movement art, to which the CC member replies that party literature constitutes a genuine trend. The CC member points out that the party promotes movement culture, while the dissidents declare the party undermines the movement with blanket condemnations of genres that may have innovative elements. Etc., etc., etc.

For the record: There is Party culture (and its anti-thesis!); there is movement culture; there is pop culture; there is reactionary culture. As well, there is a dialectical exchange, a fluid ebb and flow, amongst all these and many other interests, such that several are often (indeed, usually) combined into any given manifestation.

So, what are we left with? Let us hope not with an evolving theory of who can posit legitimation. Finally the anti-Party line asks: "What is literature?" Finally the Party asks: "What is revolutionary literature?"

Well, what is revolutionary literature? What is revolutionary today, may become passe.

I would recommend we close this particular chapter of the debate. "Attitude to historical culture?" "Distinction between imaginative literature and publicism?" Spare me the good news.

I should pose a new question, as against legitimacy of this or that interest delineation. What is struggle (including what is the journal **Struggle**)? What does it consist in? Is each cultural interest or outlook squared off against the next? Yes no? What is leadership? Is it the example of a better product? Promo of a sympathetic product? Denunciation of an antagonistic product? Of course, but how to square these three one to the next in any given product.

What contribution does the vanguard have for society at large?

If this does not sound too very literary, it isn't. It's methodological. Let's take this debate to a higher, more real level. In the 70's the COUSML discussed theory (is there a Party?). In the 80's the MLP discussed organization (what is a Party?). All this seems clear, whereas the anti-Party line does not. Next we should ask ourselves: What is methodology (what does a Party do?). How is the Party sympathetic (or not) with objective struggle and the proletarian condition?

Alas, poor "Discontented," this is the question.

[Name omitted]
A Glib Critic
San Francisco<>

Comment by the Supplement:

It seems that the above letter expresses, in part, the idea that the need is to discuss the tasks of revolutionary literature and the tasks of the Party with respect to literature, rather than is revolutionary literature legitimate. In fact, the discontented have kept away from putting forward their view of the tasks for revolutionary literature. The letter appears to express a legitimate impatience with this.

But the above letter also seems to have a rather impressionistic conception of the different sides in the struggle. It is not accurate in reproducing the different stands.

Perhaps for that reason, it misses an important point. Let us use the letter's own analogy of the literature debate to questions of Party building. When the need for a Party is denied altogether, then one has to fight this liquidationism as much as one would wish to simply discuss positive tasks

of party-building. In the 80's, the MLP has not only discussed in more detail the tasks of the Party and of Party work, but it has also dealt with the struggle against liquidationism. There is the need to defend the very idea of building a party and of upholding Party spirit. A similar issue arises with respect to literature. The MLP has not only developed its work a bit further on the cultural front. At the same time, it has been necessary to fight liquidationist views on literature. When literature is put above the class

struggle, when the existence of a Marxist-Leninist line on literary issues is denied, and when the building of a revolutionary trend in literature is shuffled aside, then this is liquidationism on literary questions.

Opposition to this liquidationism on literary issues is required to continue the close connection of revolutionary work and literary work. And it is this connection that provides the concrete answers to the questions of work on the problem of culture in the U.S. today. <>
