

May 1st is international working class day. In El Salvador, workers will demonstrate against the U.S.-maintained government of the death squads. In Nicaragua, workers will protest the onslaught of the new U.S.-backed government of contra lovers. In South Africa, the black workers will strike against the U.S.-supported government of the racists. And in the U.S. and other countries around the world, contingents of workers, large or small, will raise the banner of May Day.

May Day is a time when men and women workers, workers of every race and nationality, workers in every country, all stand up together. When they link arms in recognition that they are one class, with common interests and common aims. They are a class in struggle against the capitalist ruling class.

### Class struggle or everything backward

This May Day the world is being shaken up. But if the working class does not stand up and put its stamp on the transformations, the downtrodden will be thrown backwards.

Just look at the upsurge of racism in the U.S., the nationalist bloodbaths in Eastern Europe, the Buthelezi tribal attacks in South Africa, the religious wars in India, or the anti-immigrant

crusades in Europe. The wealthy rulers are dredging up this racism, and woman-hating, and everything foul and backward to rip the working class apart.

It's up to the workers to stand against the racism and ignorance, to unite against the real cause of misery, and lead all the oppressed forward in a fight against the capitalist exploiters.

### Socialism and the future

The rich are also dirtying the workers' dream of a world without exploitation and oppression, with their foul lies that socialism has failed. The rich are hiding that the debacle in Eastern Europe and Russia is in fact the collapse of state-capitalists — tyrants who merely disguised themselves as communists, just as Bush disguises himself as being "gentler and kinder."

They are glorying in the capitalist "free market." But if workers want to see the truth, they need look no farther than their own experience in this cathedral of capitalism, the U.S.A.

Even now, in the midst of "good times," the American dream turns out to be a nightmare for many. Homelessness grows, exploitation of child labor flourishes, police terror and racist outrages abound, the environment is in the garbage dump, and half the country has

sunk into economic crisis. But neither the kinder and gentler Bush administration, nor the Democratic Congress, does a thing. Oh, they find the money to bail out the Savings and Loan banks. And, yes, they find the funds to invade Panama and build death squads in El Salvador. But they have nothing for the working masses except more cutbacks, more trouble.

This is the reality of capitalism. Surely, the working class can do better than the money grubbers. Surely the workers can build a society based not on the greed of the few but on the common needs of the many. A society where the interests of the working masses are paramount. A society without the exploiters, where cutthroat competition is replaced by the cooperative efforts of the working people.

So what if it's been proved that the rich bureaucrats ruined Eastern Europe, and China, and Cuba. So what if they turned Russia backward from socialist revolution to state-capitalist oppression. We are warned. We will not follow those bureaucrats' revision of Marxism-Lenin-

ism. We will fight for something better, for something radically different, for workers' socialism.

### Link arms in struggle

May Day is a good time for the workers to throw off the barrage of lies. Even now, struggle is breaking out here and there.

This year, in the days surrounding May Day, homeless people are calling for the occupation of abandoned buildings to protest against Bush and his housing department. Greyhound workers will be picketing against strike breaking. Chrysler workers will be rallying against layoffs. Women's rights fighters will be confronting Bush's anti-abortion crusaders. Solidarity activists will be protesting U.S. intervention in Central America.

Workers, link arms. Join in these struggles. Carry them forward throughout the year. And bring them together into one class-wide movement against the capitalist ruling class. May Day is international working class day. Let us raise the banner of working class struggle. ■

## Support the Greyhound strikers!

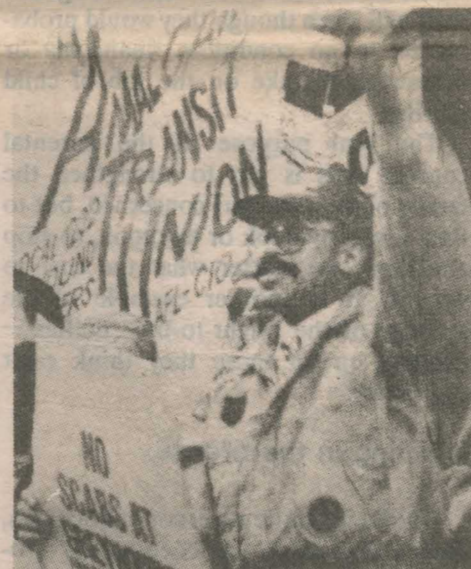
Nearly 10,000 Greyhound workers are continuing their battle against blatant union busting. Since March 2, when 6,300 drivers and 3,500 office and maintenance workers walked out, at least 55 strikers have been injured and one killed in confrontations with scabs and police.

The first day of the strike, Robert Waterhouse was run down by a scab bus and killed in Redding, California. This was murder, but the police have not arrested or brought charges against the scab driver.

On March 9, rallies and marches were held at Greyhound terminals across the country to protest the murder of Waterhouse. In San Francisco, Greyhound tried to send out a scab bus during the protest. Some 300 workers broke through police barricades to stop the bus. Workers showered the bus with rocks and eggs. Two rows of police were on hand to protect the bus, but the workers forced Greyhound to pull the bus back into the terminal. In New York, nearly 2,000 workers rallied. Many marched into the Port Authority terminal and forced the closing of the Greyhound ticket counter. Hundreds of strikers also rallied in Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Cleveland, and many other cities.

Since March 9, mass pickets have been set up for a day or two in New York, Boston, and several other cities.

Greyhound made record profits in 1988 and 1989, chiefly through eliminating about one-third of the jobs and



cutting wages by 20% in the 1987 contract. Workers now make about the same pay as 15 years ago, but Greyhound refuses to increase wages and is demanding cuts in sick leave and other benefits.

Greyhound is obviously trying to break the union. Its key "take it or leave it" demand is for the right to subcontract 70% of the routes to nonunion companies. Well before the strike started, it began to hire replacement drivers. But over half have quit. So Greyhound is now offering a \$2,000 starting bonus to attract scabs and subcontracting routes to other carriers.

And Greyhound has gotten the full

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See GREYHOUND

## What's in store for Nicaragua?

What's happening in Nicaragua now that the U.S.-backed, pro-contra Violeta Chamorro won the elections? Nothing good for the workers and peasants, that's for sure.

Chamorro's National Opposition Union (UNO) promised their victory would bring an end to the contra war. But their "demobilization" agreement lets thousands and thousands of contras loose inside Nicaragua, rifles in hand, free to terrorize peasants and farm

workers for another whole period of time.

Chamorro's UNO promised their victory would revive the economy and help the impoverished masses out of their misery. But even though the U.S. has ended its economic blockade and promised some \$300 million in aid, the working masses are not likely to see the benefit. Indeed, Chamorro has already

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## Why communism will survive the collapse of revisionism

There's a lot of talk these days about the collapse of communism. It's drummed into the workers' heads day in and day out. But what the gentlemen of the wealthy press don't tell you is that there are two opposed forces who go by the name of communism in the present-day world.

What gets generally passed off as

communism are the dying regimes of privileged bureaucrats and their supporters. But what the media never discuss are the revolutionary forces of workers' communism — who are found among the workers and poor, organizing struggles with socialist goals. These forces are opposed to both Western-style capitalism and Soviet-style state-capitalism.

Let's take a look at these two forces:

### The collapse of false communism

Last year, one after the other, the Soviet-bloc regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed. The ruling parties there — the revisionist state-capitalists who have

falsely claimed to be communists — could no longer hold on to power in the face of popular unrest. They could no longer lie that they represented the working class.

This year, the leaders of the Soviet Union itself are facing deep trouble. Gorbachev launched the program of

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# Parental consent laws do not strengthen families, but remove rights

Anti-abortion rights crusaders in Michigan have launched a new campaign to restrict abortion rights. They are conducting a petition drive to force the state legislature to vote on their parental consent bill, which would require women under 18 to get written consent from a parent or guardian, or a waiver from a juvenile court judge, in order to get an abortion.

## Good family relations cannot be created by government decree

This proposal, and similar ones in other states, appeal to the desire of parents to look after the well-being of their children. No doubt it is better when pregnant girls can discuss the matter with their parents and receive loving support. But good relations between parents and children aren't the result of a government decree. Nor are all parents reasonable. Creating the legal fiction that all families are supportive and all judges sympathetic friends of young women, will in most cases make a difficult situation worse, or even result in tragedy.

The final decision on abortion must rest with the young woman concerned. After all, she is the one who will bear the consequences and responsibilities of having a child.

Moreover, parental consent laws would not stop girls from getting abortions on their own. Many teenagers would instead risk injury or death in illegal back-alley abortions. And many teenage women would be forced to bear children against their will, even though they would probably be in no condition, financially or otherwise, to take on the job of child rearing.

The real purpose of the parental consent laws is not to strengthen the family or help the girl concerned, but to find a way, by hook or by crook, to stop abortions, no matter what the cost to women. It is another example of the strategy of the "right-to-life" bullies — ganging up on those they think can't fight back.

## Waffling in the breeze

The Democratic governor of Michigan, James Blanchard, has been widely promoted as a champion of women's rights, and he vetoed an earlier attempt at

parental consent legislation. Of course, this veto was only necessary because many Democrats in the state legislature had voted with anti-abortion Republicans to pass this bill.

Meanwhile Blanchard, various Democratic legislators, and the National Organization of Women decided to back their own alternative parental consent bill. It would allow a pregnant teenager to get permission for an abortion from any of a number of different relatives, medical

personnel, or a juvenile court judge. This would allow many girls, especially those in more favored situations, to make up their own minds. But the bureaucratic obstacles would continue to press hard on young women in more unfortunate positions, and especially poorer women. At a time when they already have much on their mind, they would be faced with a formidable legal maze.

But the rights of poorer women are hardly the first thing on Blanchard's

mind. This February he continued his slashing of social programs affecting poor families by proposing a 3.8% cut in the already inadequate Aid to Families with Dependent Children welfare payments.

It is not the Republicans, the Democrats, or the bourgeois women's organizations like NOW who will defend working women's rights. This is a task that must be shouldered by workers and progressive activists. ■

## Child care bill: An ounce of care for a pound of need

On March 30, the House of Representatives approved a Democratic-sponsored child care legislation package. House Speaker Foley (D-Wash.) hailed it as a "great achievement." In reality, the bill shows how half-hearted Congress is towards the child care crisis. And yet this bill will probably be cut down in conference with the Senate, which passed a smaller bill, and with the Bush administration, which hardly wants anything at all.

Today over half of all women work, and some 57% of them have children under 13. There is a vast need for child care. Decent private day care, if available at all, can cost \$3-5,000 per year per child. This is a crushing burden for millions of working class and poor families. Meanwhile government subsidies for child care for low-income families have been slashed over the years.

The House bill doesn't come close to meeting this crying need. It does not provide a universal system, but it merely adds a bit to a jumble of disorganized programs. As well, two-thirds of the bill simply consists of additional tax credits.

## Inadequate subsidies

Under this bill, for fiscal 1991, the total increase for child care would be about \$1.5 billion. This includes vouchers to poor families, direct grants to private day care centers, the extension of hours for the Head Start pre-school program, and latchkey programs at schools. When you break it down for each program, the meaning of this figure becomes clear.

Take the Head Start preschool program. It has been praised for years as one of the few government programs that

actually work. Yet now, after two decades, less than 20% of the eligible children are enrolled in it. The House bill proudly proclaims that it would restore full-day sessions and extend Head Start all year. This would be quite useful. But how much does the bill provide for this? It adds 40% or 45% to the Head Start budget. This would only suffice if a large majority of eligible children continue to be kept out.

## Not child care at all

In terms of money, most of the child care bill doesn't even go to child care programs, but simply to the "Earned Income Tax Credit" program. These credits actually have nothing to do with child care. (This is not the "Child Care Tax Credit.") The same credits that this bill presents as aid for child care could equally be described as aid for food, rent, and utilities, or anything else. But since the amount of money involved can't lift a family out of poverty, it cannot solve the child care issue any more than it can solve the malnutrition, housing, or heating problems.

This part of the bill adjusts the Earned Income Tax Credits which provide some money for poor working families with children. It also claims to cut down on child care tax credits for richer families, because under the name of aiding the working poor, Congress had previously provided tax credits for families with incomes even above \$90,000.

The bill will add to the amounts provided currently. Any relief for the poor is welcome of course. But a large part of this credit simply compensates for the increase in Social Security taxes which Congress forced on the poorest families in the 80's. For Congress to pat itself on the back for day care because it provides some tax credits is a fraud.

## Subsidizing the church

The House bill also continues the trend to give more money to the church. It allows public money to be spent on church-run child care. Actually, given the desperation to find any child care spot at all, many parents are forced to use religious centers whether they like it or not. And some reports say that the bill also allows religious institutions getting federal subsidies to give preference to those of the same faith in hiring workers and accepting children. All in all the bill is another step towards funding religious indoctrination of children.

## Day care standards

The bill provides for government commissions to establish day care standards over the next period. But without adequate funding, presently existing standards are pretty much a fraud.

As well, there is the danger that licensing will be used to wipe out many of the small, individual day care providers. While the child care offered by such providers varies tremendously in quality, if they are simply wiped out while only providing a token increase of day care subsidies in return, it will actually worsen the day care crisis.

## For a universal child care system

There should be a universal system of child care, available to all working and poor families. This should include massive improvement of the schools. But the Congressional bills, and Bush's resistance to even that much spending for children, shows that the capitalists are continuing to hold the children of the poor hostage. ■

## Guam bans abortion and free speech

In mid-March, the U.S.-occupied Pacific Ocean island of Guam banned abortion except where the life of the women is threatened. It made performing abortion a felony and having one, a misdemeanor. As well, it is illegal to talk about abortions. Already an ACLU lawyer, Janet Benshoof, was charged for "soliciting" abortion because she gave a speech in Guam mentioning that women could get legal abortions in Hawaii, some three thousand miles away or so. The law is now in effect, although it will be voted on again, this time in a general election, on November 6.

Idaho recently passed a somewhat different bill outlawing almost all abortions, but Governor Andrus vetoed it on March 30. Andrus, who is a Democrat, said he opposed abortion but wanted some changes in the bill.

The anti-abortion fanatics want to get Idaho-type laws passed and then chal-

lenged before the Supreme Court. They think that the Supreme Court justices, in order to uphold such strict laws, will have to overturn the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion, rather than reinterpret it.

Meanwhile the Guam bill shows that the anti-abortion moralists don't include the right to speech in their alleged support of the right to life. ■

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# What happened at the clinic defense conference

On March 23-25, pro-choice activists from a number of clinic defense organizations met at the national clinic defense conference in Detroit. At the speeches and workshops differing views clashed. This was a useful forum which provided a picture of the different trends in the movement.

The clinic defenders are those who actively confront the holy bullies of Operation Rescue (OR). To thwart the anti-women offensive, they have had to stand against physical intimidation, against the police, and against the slanders of the press. Yet they have punctured the arrogance of OR, kept many clinics open, and shown in the streets that it is not OR but the defenders of women's rights who represent the real mass movement in this country.

## Bourgeois women's organizations and the movement

One of the hottest issues was the role of NOW, the National Organization for Women, and other pro-establishment women's organizations. Those clinic activists who had actually pushed anti-abortion fanatics away from clinic doors had many stories about the obstruction from NOW leaders and from the police. A number of stories came especially from BACAOR, the San Francisco Bay Area Committee Against Operation Rescue. One activist bitterly related how NOW sent out fundraising letters in the name of clinic defense after seeking to prevent activists from confronting anti-abortion bullies.

Some other activists said they worked closely with NOW, such as the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force and New York's WHAM (Women's Health Action and Mobilization). But the Washington group, in the name of non-violence, said it refuses on principle to remove the anti-abortion bullies from the clinics. Meanwhile New York's WHAM displayed at its literature table its "clinic escort recommendations" which rule out denouncing the anti-abortion bullies and call for ignoring them instead. For that matter, WHAM's guidelines even dis-

courage discussion with friendly forces in front of clinics by opposing "extended discussions with clinic neighbors." The guidelines, however, create expectations in lawyers, injunctions, clinic owners, and police. All this is completely in accord with the policy of Detroit and Michigan NOW, which have both issued statements demanding an end to militant denunciation of OR in front of the clinics. In fact, WHAM's guidelines were prepared with "input from the Reproductive Rights Committee, NOW-NYC." WHAM has carried out some militant actions against, for example, the bigotry of the Catholic church hierarchy, but they seem to have different views about the clinic struggle itself.

Meanwhile a national spokeswoman for "Refuse & Resist" also directly defended NOW in the name of "uniting all who can be united." She admitted that NOW did not stand for all the things that other activists did. But she was sure that, in Refuse & Resist's list of things to work for, something could be found that NOW could unite with.

The majority of the conference however opposed NOW's obstruction of the struggle. But the conference was also under the influence of the reformist policy of the trotskyist Revolutionary Workers League (RWL). RWL denounced NOW at the conference, and talked of the need for a "clear-cut political alternative." This sounds good. But it turns out that what RWL meant is preparing a list of demands which says little if anything about NOW. And RWL members expressed optimism about winning over whole chapters of NOW, and even invited Detroit NOW president Karen Sundberg to the conference.

## NOW in person

Actually, Ms. Sundberg did attend the conference, and she denied all knowledge of who in NOW was doing all those bad things that irritated the activists. Why, she said ironically, she had been in NOW so long, but everyone else must know NOW better than she does. Another conference participant, however, pointed

out that it was Karen Sundberg herself who last fall compiled a statement demanding complete reliance on the police and endorsing an earlier Michigan NOW statement which rebaited the activists. (Ms. Sundberg's statement was reprinted in the Nov. 15, 1989 issue of the *Workers' Advocate Supplement*.)

## How to link up with the masses?

Another major issue facing the conference was how to bring new people into the struggle. One BACAOR activist, for example, described BACAOR's experience in taking part in the protests against the right-wing fanatics of the "traditional values coalition." This helped BACAOR win over other activists to taking part in clinic defenses. Meanwhile the MLP had prepared a resolution on "mobilizing the working masses" which dealt with means of bringing pro-choice agitation into the factories and working class communities.

However, here too the conference was under the sway of the reformist stand advocated by RWL among others. This held that the preparation of lists of demands was the key thing to attracting thousands upon thousands of new activists. And the BACAOR delegation, for example, did not seem to see any difference between this and the different method which it had described.

## On the trade union bureaucrats

Another issue that came up repeatedly was the nature of the trade unions. RWL identified the working class with the trade unions. When it talked of basing the movement on the working class, it meant centering everything on trade union resolutions and running for posts in trade union elections. RWL members might denounce the labor union hacks, but their vision was restricted to the bureaucratic aspect of the present government-regulated and hack-dominated union structures. Over and over again, RWL denounced the idea of laying stress on other forms of working class action besides the union apparatus as supposedly abandoning the unions, abandoning the working class, or even abandoning the struggle against the labor hacks.

The MLP called for activists to approach the working class directly, put forward concrete ways of doing this, and opposed illusions in the present-day trade union leadership. MLP members pointed out what one can really expect from the trade unions at present, hamstrung as they are by the labor hacks. They pointed out what really happens to trade union resolutions, and, for that matter, that the AFL-CIO hasn't even endorsed the pro-choice position yet. The MLP held that the activists must develop confidence in their own ability to approach the masses, and develop the independent initiative of the masses. This is as true in the workers' economic struggles as in the pro-choice struggle. To expect that the pro-capitalist union apparatus will be

transformed in the coming year and become a bastion of the movement is pie-in-the-sky fantasy.

## Results of the discussion

The conference allowed an exchange of views and brought a number of activists together. But it failed to achieve unity on the tasks facing the clinic defense movement, and this at a time when it is widely felt that the clinic defense movement is at a turning point.

For example, the conference failed to adopt a reply to the bourgeois women's movement, such as NOW, NARAL, etc., which had been publicly denouncing the clinic defense militants. The resolutions of the conference haven't been published yet, but as discussed on the last day they appear to say the minimum about NOW, simply to justify holding a separate conference. They seem to be in the spirit of "NOW fights its way, and we fight ours."

The conference also did not speak directly on the controversy on what should be done when OR does not seek to close down a clinic, or on the different methods of escorts being used by different organizations. Different ideas were slurred together. For example, the MLP-proposed resolution, "Combat the right-wing anti-abortion movement," spoke to some of these issues. But discussion of this resolution was blocked on the grounds that everyone allegedly agreed with it, and the resolution was simply passed unanimously. In fact, differences exist on these questions, and the weekend unfortunately proved too short for these issues to be explored.

## The organizational question

A good deal of the conference, especially Sunday, was spent worrying about what type of organization to establish. RWL argued that unless the conference established an organization, it was useless. It held that a new organization, with a list of various demands and campaigns, would solve the present difficulties facing the clinic defense movement and ensure explosive growth, leading to a conference of thousands next year.

In our view, however, it was the discussion among activists, not the organizational arrangements, that was the valuable core of this conference. This discussion only went so far, and the critical issue is how to deepen it. The immediate tasks facing the movement include developing pro-choice agitation widely (even if OR changes its tactics), linking up with the working masses, standing up to the attacks of the bourgeois women's movement, and throwing off the reformist line. It is this that is needed to have the pro-choice movement develop vigorously and also to contribute strongly to developing a working women's movement. (The resolutions proposed by the MLP can be found in the March 20 issue of the *Workers' Advocate Supplement*.)

## International Women's Day in the Bay Area

On March 8, hundreds marched in San Francisco to commemorate International Women's Day. The next day, Women's Day was celebrated in action.

Joe Scheidler, a leading bigot of the anti-abortion movement, came to Oakland, California and was met by a blockade of angry activists. It took protection from almost 100 police for Scheidler to be able to carry off his speaking event. The same police who wait hours upon

hours before moving in to remove Scheidler's thugs when they blockade a clinic, jumped into action when the shoe was on the other foot. No logistics problems or lack of sufficient forces this time. The police formed an aisle with their motorcycles to escort anti-abortion crazies into the meeting, while dozens of other officers held a perimeter around the church meeting place or surrounded the pro-choice demonstrators.

Activists weren't intimidated, and they shouted to the bigots "How does it feel

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At the pro-choice protest against Scheidler in Oakland, March 9.

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# What next in Nicaragua?

## Chamorro out to return land to the wealthy

In the elections, Violeta Chamorro's National Opposition Union (UNO) promised to revive the Nicaraguan economy. But, since the election victory, she's begun to reveal that economic revival will be at the expense of the already impoverished working masses.

On March 2, Chamorro's chief economic advisor Francisco Mayorga Balladares, explained that the new regime will move immediately to return or make compensation for most land seized by the revolution, and will sell many of the large state enterprises to private capitalists. Meanwhile, Ramior Gurdian, vice president of the High Council for Private Enterprise (COSEP) and likely to be the new minister of agriculture, has also threatened that state farms will be "privatized" and the co-ops dissolved into "minifundia."

In the hopes of heading off mass resistance, Chamorro is promising to not displace farmers or workers who benefited from land reform programs.

But selling off the state farms, by itself, accounts for some 13% of the richest and most productive agricultural land. And it means that the some 100,000 farm workers on these plantations, who drove the private capitalists away, will face the revenge and stepped up exploitation of the returning private exploiters.

If the new regime also dissolves the co-ops into "minifundia," it means peasants will keep small plots of their own. But probably only for a while. Without the necessary capital for production, seeds, etc. the small peasants will soon be in debt and forced to sell off the land.

## Contras still won't demobilize

A plan that is supposed to disarm the U.S.-backed contra butchers was reached March 23. The agreement, known as the Tocontin Plan, was signed by contra leaders, representatives of president-elect Chamorro, and Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua. It was immediately praised by Sandinista head Daniel Ortega, who declared, "I fully support this accord."

But for all the hype about demobilization, the vaguely worded agreement actually allows the fully armed contras to continue to infiltrate into Nicaragua from their base camps in Honduras until April 20. And once inside Nicaragua it is anybody's guess when the contras might give up their weapons. Indeed, General Augustin Quesada Gomez, who heads the United Nations forces responsible to carry out the plan, admitted that the contras would not be disarmed except voluntarily.

The plan sets April 20 as the deadline for contras in Honduras to dismantle their camps and hand over their weapons.

As well, under the plan, contras inside Nicaragua are supposed to gather in designated zones, where they are to be protected by international troops under General Quesada's command while they are given help in returning to civilian life. Chamorro's representatives have promised pensions to the widows and orphans of contras and to wounded rebel veterans in "recognition of their patriotic labors," that is, their labor of killing patriots and burning farms, factories and medical clinics.

But the designated enclaves may not be established for 90 days or more. And contra leaders claim they will keep their weapons, for perhaps 18 months. Although General Quesada claims that once inside the enclaves the contras must disarm, he has admitted his forces will sit

on their hands if the contras chose to hang on to their weapons.

And what will thousands of armed contras inside Nicaragua mean? It doesn't require much imagination to guess. In early March, contras attacked co-ops around five villages in northern Nicaragua, kidnaping a dozen civilians and

wounding two Sandinista soldiers. The contras are hoodlums in the service of the capitalist counterrevolution. The demobilization agreement means that for now UNO is still keeping alive an army of counterrevolution which can be used to terrorize farm workers and peasants.

## Managua poor seize land

Since the election, thousands of poor people in Managua have been invading empty lots and rushing to build shacks. The poor fear what the capitalist regime of Chamorro will mean. So they have begun to take action now to grab up some property, in the hopes of being in a better position to defend themselves when the capitalists take over.

One morning in mid-March, hundreds of squatters occupied some state-owned land behind Managua's Ivan Montenegro market. "The new government won't allow this kind of thing — capitalists are against land seizures," said Luz Dalila Pierrott, a young mother of four. "We either take the land now, or we would never get it."

## Governing from below?

The Sandinista leaders have been trying to put a good face on their election disaster. The elections showed that many of their own members voted against them. So they have been scurrying around trying to shore up their ranks by claiming they will "defend the gains of the revolution" and will "govern from below." But what do these militant sounding slogans actually mean? A recent meeting of pro-Sandinista union officials gives a good idea.

Hundreds of officials and activists from the pro-Sandinista union of health workers gathered at the headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) in early March to discuss what they should do in the wake of the election debacle. From the floor, many of the activists rose to call for immediate wage and benefit increases, for improvements in health care, for strikes, for distribution of weapons, and for rebuilding the workers and peasants militias. Sandinista unions have long been detached from their members, and frequently union officials acted as bureaucratic overlords dictating to the workers. Nevertheless, it appears that those speaking at this meeting reflected

a desire, at least among a section of the workers, to fight back against the capitalists.

But the top Sandinista officials would have nothing to do with it. Victor Tirado, speaking for the nine-member National Directorate of the Sandinistas, denounced the calls for mass struggle as "adventures" and "disorder." He declared that Nicaragua had entered a "new stage" where "Everything is legitimized — the Sandinista Front, the revolution, democracy, the opposition, and the new administration. The FSLN will work within this legitimacy, within the channels of the constitution and the judicial system so as not to lose what we have conquered in these 10 years."

As far as defending the gains of the revolution, Tirado argued this "should unfold with a peaceful tone, with tranquillity."

And he explained that "Govern from below does not mean adventures and disorder." The goal should not be to "disrupt the economy with these demands. Nobody can be in agreement with

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See FROM BELOW*

## MLP of Nicaragua calls for struggle

There is another force in Nicaragua. A force that has continued to stand by the hard-pressed workers and peasants. A force fighting to defend the gains of the revolution. A force that stands for socialism. This force is the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua.

### A party of the revolution

The MLPN (then called MAP-ML) fought heroically in the anti-Somoza revolution. It was a key organizer of the insurrection among the workers. And it built up the MILPAS, the second largest revolutionary militia that carried out the armed struggle.

After the insurrection, the MLPN took part in the movement for workers' control of the factories and the struggles of the poor peasants. And it warned the masses about the dangers of following the petty bourgeois leadership of the Sandinistas. Because of its revolutionary stand, a number of its leaders were jailed by the Sandinistas and its publications were censored and suppressed.

### A party of mass struggle

In recent years, the MLPN has continued to fight both the counterrevolution by the contras and the UNO and against the betrayals of the Sandinistas. Its

Frente Obrero (FO) unions and committees of struggle in the factories have been in the center of many important fights to defend the workers. FO has also worked to organize the poor peasants, and been involved in land seizures and building co-ops to defend the peasants from the landlords. The MLPN has also been involved in Committees of Popular Struggle in the working class barrios. They organize workers and unemployed around their pressing needs for health care, education, jobs, bus service and roads, water and sanitation.

### Program of struggle in the elections

This year, the MLPN ran candidates for the national assembly in every region of the country, except the Atlantic Coast. And they ran in municipal elections in the 17 most important cities. Due to the demobilizing character of the elections, the non-political fiesta atmosphere created by the Sandinistas, and the U.S.-UNO blackmail to continue the economic blockade and the dirty contra war, the masses did not turn their dissat-

isfaction into votes for MLPN. Nevertheless, the MLPN received 8,115 votes for president, more for the national assembly, and especially developed its links with the peasants in Matagalpa and Jinotega where it received over 2,000 votes.

And these were votes for struggle. The MLPN ran on a program of struggle, a program to encourage the mass actions of the workers and peasants both during and after the elections.

### Resist the dismantling of revolutionary gains

Immediately after the election, the MLPN issued a communique setting out the tasks needed to resist the dismantling of the gains won by the revolution. It focuses on defense of the conditions of the masses. Among other things, it calls for a fight to index wages to the soaring cost of living and for mass struggle so that not a single layoff or unjust firing is allowed from the factories and offices. It also appeals against surrendering arms and to organize worker and peasant militias.

The MLPN is known as a party that puts its words into deed. It is the force rallying the working masses for struggle against the capitalist offensive in Nicaragua. It is the force that solidarity activists in the U.S. should support.



Militants of the Workers Front associated with the MLP of Nicaragua in the midst of construction workers' strike, 1988.





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

### Thousands declare 'U.S. Out of Central America!'

On March 24, thousands of people across the U.S. marched against "our" government's intervention in Central America.

Shouting "Stop the U.S. war in Central America!" and "Money for jobs, not for war, U.S. out of El Salvador!" over 10,000 people rallied in Washington, D.C. They marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. A shantytown was set up. And for several hours protesters blockaded the entrance to the White House driveway and security gates. The crowd was boisterous, shouting out "USA, CIA, how many kids have you killed today?" and "George Bush has gotta go!" Some 580 people were arrested in the White House blockade.

In San Francisco, nearly 5,000 people marched. In that city, longshoremen have

joined a boycott of Salvadoran coffee imported by Folgers. The longshoremen have refused to unload the coffee in San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver, Canada.

Over 1,000 people marched in Austin, Texas. Some 2,500 marched on the Los Angeles city hall. Nearly 200 people marched through Houston's Central American community. Sixty people demonstrated in Omaha. And in Seattle, about 2,000 people demonstrated. The Marxist-Leninist Party took an active part in a number of the demonstrations. In Seattle, many youth joined with the Party to shout militant slogans like "Power to the workers, power to the poor, U.S. out of El Salvador!" They also caught up with some racist skinheads and shouted them down. ■



Seattle, March 24.

### Salvadoran masses resist state of siege

Since November, the working masses of San Salvador have been confronted with a "state of siege." Retaliating against the guerrilla offensive in El Salvador's capital, and in fear of an upsurge among the masses, the death-squad regime of Cristiani outlawed strikes, demonstrations and political meetings involving more than five people. There has been a steady stream of arrests, disappearances, and assassinations. According to documents of the non-government Human Rights Commission, some 908 opposition activists have been jailed and there have been 2,184 assassinations over the last four months. The Salvador legislature has twice extended the state of siege, now until early April.

But the masses in San Salvador are resisting the repression. Although the 35,000-student University of El Salvador (UES) has been shut down since November, and some 15 student and workers'

leaders have been killed, students have been holding class in homes and abandoned buildings. On February 23, about 300 students held a public rally demanding the withdrawal of all troops from the university. Following the rally, they went into the street to distribute leaflets. This was the first public rally since the state of siege began.

Funerals for people murdered by the regime have also been turned into protest rallies. And union congresses and assemblies, which the regime has allowed for the election of officers, have brought out thousands of workers to discuss organizing protests against price rises, layoffs, and police repression.

On February 25, the Salvadoran Association of Telecommunications Workers (ASTTEL) held a rally at the Central Roma, a major center for the government-run phone and mail system. Union leaders were denied entrance into the

#### FROM BELOW Continued from previous page

pushing the economy backwards." Instead, he argued "To develop the economy, what is needed above all is political and economic stability in the country. Without stability, there won't be either foreign or domestic investment." This, he declared, is "the new reality we have to accept."

So instead of a party of revolution, the Sandinistas are to be a party of "stability." Instead of mass struggle, they will

stand for "peace and tranquility." Instead of defending the masses, they will defend "foreign and domestic investment." For years, the Sandinista leaders have turned their backs on the masses in a quest for a deal with the U.S.-backed capitalists. And now, having lost the election, they are still looking for a deal. They are promising the capitalists that they will hold the masses in check if they are made junior partners in the new capitalist regime. Shame on the Sandinista leaders! ■

facility. So they took turns addressing a group of workers inside the plant's main gate by standing on a makeshift platform. Average wages at the company are 1,000 colones a month, about \$145. They demanded a raise of 500 colones. Workers shouted "Viva ASTTEL!"

On March 7, about 480 peasant delegates attended a conference in San Salvador. They demanded more land for peasants, government-guaranteed prices for agricultural products, and a moratorium on debts.

About 450 delegates to the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) met February 22 and called for public demonstrations for March 24 and for May Day "with or without the state of siege."

On March 24, around 10,000 people marched through the streets of San Salvador carrying signs declaring "stop

the repression!" The regime was forced to allow the demonstration. But military roadblocks set up all along the route blocked thousands of people from being able to join the protest.

Unfortunately, there are those who are directing the movement towards disaster. For example, Hector Bernabe Recinos, an advisor to the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers' Unions (FENASTRAS), argued at a recent congress that, "Now it is possible to achieve a *concertacion* (an accord) between political parties, businessmen, workers and bosses. Businessmen themselves have said there cannot be economic development as long as the war continues." In the name of peace, the FENASTRAS leader is calling on the workers to come to terms with their exploiters. ■

### What does the setback in Nicaragua mean for Central America?

The real shame of the February 25 elections would be if we failed to learn from them. But what are the lessons?

There are some who say that revolution has failed, and so the people must go all out to make a deal with the right wing, whether in Nicaragua or El Salvador or elsewhere. But it was precisely years of such deals that resulted in the victory of Chamorro. Not revolution, but the policy of wheeling and dealing with the right wing is responsible for this fiasco.

The Sandinistas believed that they had the workers and peasants in the bag, so they could concentrate on conciliating the right wing. But you can't turn a mass movement on and off at will. Any revolutionary organization worthy of the name must pay constant attention to encouraging the initiative and organization of the workers and peasants. It must more and more merge with the masses, and not take them for granted.

February 25 also shows that the Bush is not going to let up in the war against Central America. Despite years of Arias peace plan maneuvers, the contras were still around during the voting, and haven't disbanded yet. And only the victory of Chamorro convinced Bush that

the elections were fair.

February 25 shows that Congress, as well as Bush, is a bitter enemy of all progress in Central America. Democratic congressmen joined with Republican warmongers to join in a chorus of praise for the Nicaraguan right wing, and to debate among themselves who had the honor of strangling the Nicaraguan revolution. Ever since the Arias plan began, the demonstrations against U.S. intervention have dwindled to almost nothing, in order not to embarrass the Democrats. Let this policy be banished, never to return.

The lesson of February 25 is that only the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants can bring progress to Central America. Let us build solidarity with the insurgent workers and peasants in Central America! This is the force that is shaking the ground under the rulers in El Salvador and Guatemala. This is the force in Nicaragua that today faces a difficult struggle against the U.S.-organized Chamorro government! This is the force that bears the burden of exploitation from imperialism and the local exploiters, and it is the force that is destined to overturn the old world of injustice and tyranny. ■

#### NICARAGUA Continued from front page

made it clear that she plans to take back land and enterprises seized by workers and peasants in the revolution and quickly return them to the capitalists and landlords.

Will the Sandinista leaders mobilize a fight against this new onslaught by the capitalists? Don't count on it. Despite talk of "defending the gains of the revolution," the Sandinista leadership is spending its days wheeling and dealing with Chamorro to become a junior partner in the new regime. Even before the elections, the Sandinista leaders staked their hopes for the revival of Nicaragua not on mobilizing the masses but, instead, on making a deal with U.S. imperialism and the Nicaraguan capitalists. Now it is preaching there should be no disruption of "stability" by the masses or the deal will fall through. "Stability," not the needs of the masses, is the bottom line for the Sandinista leaders.

But there are workers and peasants in Nicaragua who will not be corralled so easily. Some sections of the masses, including some rank-and-file Sandinistas, are preparing to fight. There is discussion of strikes to defend the workers, resistance to returning the land, rebuilding the worker and peasant militias, and so forth. And in the center of this organizing, stands the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (formerly MAP-ML) — the party of the working class, the party that has never given an inch to the Nicaraguan capitalists or U.S. imperialism.

The Nicaraguan working people face a very difficult struggle. Although there is broad dissatisfaction, this has not yet been mobilized into mass struggle or independent class organization against the capitalists. That's why the masses fell into apathy rather than voting to the left of the Sandinistas. Today, the most class conscious fighters must rally to the MLPN and begin a resistance struggle that can draw in and organize the broad masses. ■





## Strikes and workplace news

### West Virginia teachers in first statewide strike

**Charleston, West Virginia:** On March 7, teachers in the state of West Virginia began the first statewide strike in their history. The strike spread to 46 of the 55 counties in the state. The West Virginia teachers, whose pay rate ranks 49th in the country, voiced their fury at being denied a 5% raise and being asked to pay for some of their own medical benefits. The teachers held several mass rallies on the capitol steps. They were joined on their picket lines by supportive West Virginia coal miners. The teachers were forced back to work by the Democratic Governor Casper Caperton who threatened to fire all of the strikers. ■

### Auto workers protest at Solidarity House

**Detroit:** On March 15 over 100 workers from GM's Lake Orion assembly plant picketed Solidarity House, the headquarters of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Detroit. Shouting "Safety first, bring them back!" the picketers

demanding action to defend four of their fellow workers who were fired last month. They led a work stoppage at the plant against unsafe conditions. Steve Yokich, the head of the UAW's GM department, came out for a few seconds to say he would "investigate." Leaders of New Directions, a loyal opposition group in the UAW, immediately lavished praise on Yokich and declared "We love the UAW." But, to date, the workers remain fired and the unsafe conditions have not been corrected. ■

### Machinists strike Lockheed

**California:** During the early morning hours on March 12, over 1,000 machinists picketed at three Lockheed Aircraft Service Co. plants in San Bernardino County. The workers have been without a contract since November. They rejected the company's latest contract offer by a whopping 93%. ■

### Hotel workers strike

**Hawaii:** Some 7,500 members of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union

struck March 4 against 11 of the biggest, ritziest tourist hotels in Honolulu. The struggle focused on wage and benefit demands made by kitchen, service and housekeeping staff. ■

### Electrical workers occupy plant

**Philadelphia:** Electrical workers occupied the SMS Automatic Products plant for six days in January. They forced the company to pay 71 workers, who had lost their jobs when the plant closed, \$31,000 in accumulated vacation pay. ■

### Laid-off workers fight for back pay

**South Baltimore:** While a group of workers locked themselves inside the gates of the Duralite Truck Body plant, supporters lined the plant gates. The factory closed owing \$100,000 in back pay, insurance premiums and payroll deductions of union dues. The workers' demonstration forced the creditor to freeze all sales of plant equipment. ■

### Workers demand health care after plant closing

**Massachusetts:** In Middleboro, several workers were arrested while attempting to block an auction of equipment from the Maxim Motors plant. The action was called to force the company to pay hospitalization insurance premiums for three months after the plant was closed. ■

### Real earnings have declined

**Washington, D.C.:** The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that the real earnings of the average American worker declined by 2.3% since January 1989. This was due to a drastic rise of 5.2% in the Consumer Price Index, and also to the shrinkage of the average work week by 0.9%. Over the last decade, the real earnings of the average nonsupervisory worker declined 6.7%. ■

## DOWN WITH RACISM!

### Students occupy buildings at UC Berkeley

Students opposing racism held a sit-in on March 22 at California Hall on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. About 56 were arrested on charges of trespassing. The next day, 50 protesters occupied Sproul Hall after police drove them away from California Hall. The demonstrators resisted police attempts to remove them. Rocks were thrown and windows smashed. The police physically dragged the protesters from the building. One was jailed for "battery" against police, and 45 were arrested for trespassing.

The students are demanding, among other things, the maintenance of "protected status" — a policy in which all qualified students from underrepresented minorities who applied to the university were admitted. The University officials have said such admissions are no longer necessary. ■

### High school students protest racism

2,000 students walked out of two Hawthorne, California high schools on March 5 to protest racial incidents in the schools. Students walked out again on March 6 and 7. They were confronted at the exits by police, dogs, and guards. Several students were arrested in the confrontation. ■



Students in Hawthorne, California protesting racism.

### Black student evicted and jailed for opposing racism

A black female student was evicted from her dormitory room at Grand Valley State University and thrown in jail for three days for standing up against racist remarks. Fifty students rallied to her defense by sitting in at the student center. They also protested other acts of racism at the university near Grand Rapids, Michigan. The students demanded clarification of dormitory discipline which has resulted in the eviction of several black students. They also called for more minority instructors and courses in black history. ■

### Sit-in at Adrian College in Michigan

During the planning for Adrian College choir's southern tour, the United Methodist Church in Richland, Georgia complained about providing housing accommodations to the choir's two black students. The two students quit in protest. Later, 100 students held a 24-hour sit-in at the administration building protesting the racism and demanding an increase in minority recruitment and improved curriculum. ■

### 25th anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday'

3,000 people turned out on March 3

to commemorate the 25th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" at the State Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1965, marchers who began the 54-mile trek to Montgomery for the right to vote were stopped and brutalized at the bridge by state troopers, sheriffs and Ku Klux Klan.

The next day, another 4,000 people marched across the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Many raised demands against the racist school system and against recent Supreme Court decisions eroding the rights of blacks. ■

### Detroit Mayor Coleman Young traffics in Krugerrands

On March 5 Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young made the news for trafficking in Krugerrands — a symbol of the racist system of apartheid in South Africa. In

1988, a private company created and owned by the mayor, Detroit Technology and Investments Incorporated, sold \$170,000 of the South African gold coins. It also turns out that the Detroit Police and Fire Pension Funds purchased \$100,000 worth of Krugerrands in 1985. Mayor Young and Police Chief Hart, among others, sit on the Board of Trustees for the pension funds.

Just two weeks earlier the mayor had organized a Mandela Day march to posture as a fighter for blacks in South Africa. What a hypocrite! The U.S. movement in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid must denounce Coleman Young, and his cronies in the black bourgeoisie, who only seek to use the movement for their own profit and advancement. ■

### GREYHOUND Continued from front page

support of the government. Injunctions limiting pickets, and even establishing 200 foot safe zones, have been issued in almost every city. Police are escorting scabs. And strikers have been beaten and arrested when they try to halt the scab-driven buses. Democratic Party mayors in numbers of cities have played a big role in the strike breaking. In mid-March Greyhound carried full-page newspaper ads thanking, among others, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley Jr., Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, and San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos for their "support" against the strike.

It has also gotten the full support of the capitalist news media. While reporting on virtually none of the police and scab violence against the strikers, the establishment media has gone wild denouncing the "violent" strikers over isolated shootings at a few scab buses. Of course the shootings are wrong. They could injure innocent people and, for that matter, are ineffective as strike tactics. But who is to blame for this? It is the actions of Greyhound and the

government in attacking the workers, banning picket lines, and protecting scabs which has forced some of the anger and frustration into some reckless shootings.

The leaders of the Amalgamated Transit Union are also to blame. While allowing a handful of isolated mass pickets, they have mainly knuckled under to the police and courts, pulled workers off the picket lines, and allowed the scabs to pass unmolested. In San Francisco, they even tried to pull the workers away from the scab bus on March 9 after it had already been stopped by the masses of angry strikers.

Concerted, militant mass picketing is what's needed to shut down the scab operation. But the union hacks oppose militant actions. The rank and file will have to organize such a struggle themselves. In 1983, when the former owners of Greyhound tried to break the union, thousands of workers from every industry overwhelmed police in cities across the country to block and often smash up scab buses and shut down Greyhound terminals. That's what is needed again. Workers, organize in your own plants and work places to come to the aid of the Greyhound strikers. ■



# Free market disaster in Poland

There is no doubt that the Eastern European economies are in deep crisis. Revisionist state capitalism has proven to be a fiasco. But is free market capitalism the answer?

Western capitalists have held out the promise to the East European masses that free market capitalism is the alternative to "socialism." They are dangling before the people the vision of societies awash in consumer goods. And in the new governments which have taken power, these promises are being echoed by the new ministers. To help them, Western economists are swarming to Warsaw, Prague and Budapest, dispensing this advice from hotel rooms where the room rates are more than what most workers make in a month.

Poland is one country in which the pro-West Solidarity leadership, now dominating the government, has bought the free market program, hook, line and sinker. As the New Year began, they instituted a crash program, lifting government regulations, cutting subsidies, raising prices, and opening the economy to be auctioned off to private capitalists. So what have the results been like?

—In January alone, rampaging inflation and a wage squeeze succeeded in producing a 40% drop in the average standard of living. That's 40% off of declining standards that had inspired years of unrest. The British *Economist* journal, which supports the reforms, still had to admit that "Economic reform has so far meant that Poles can gaze in wonderment at now well-stocked meat stalls they have no money to buy from." The average Pole makes a mere \$14 a week.

—Add to that a worsening depression. In the first two months of 1989, industrial production dropped by 29%. The number of people officially looking for work rose from 9,600 in December to 220,000 in February. The figure is expected to climb to one to two million later this year.

—Every problem existing in Poland is getting worse. The country faces a housing shortage and in January, housing completions fell to their lowest number in 26 years. The government's solution? "We won't be able to do anything about it in less than five years — except to raise rents." This is supposed to create more space for "communal apartments," which

is the government's way of putting a good face on forcing families to share an apartment.

That's typical of what the Solidarity ministers are doing — merely trumpeting the wonders of the free market, and holding out empty promises of light at the end of the tunnel. The Minister of Labor, Jacek Kuron, who once claimed to be a radical, has taken to lauding the virtues of soup kitchens and individual initiative in his weekly TV "fireside chats." They have even abandoned talk of safety net social programs.

In these circumstances, discontent and social breakdown are on the rise. Crime is up. And while the masses grumble, they mainly have not taken to struggle. The Solidarity ministers may be cynically betraying their constituency, but the masses have yet to throw off their trust in them.

Meanwhile, right-wing bourgeois forces are raising the specter of racist demagoguery against minorities to split the masses. A number of right-wing groups have emerged, preaching dictatorial, anti-Semitic and nationalist ideas. Banners proclaiming "Jews to the ovens!"

appeared at one Warsaw public meeting — the police did nothing. Meanwhile, one of the closest advisors of Polish Catholic leader Glemp holds that only Catholics are true Poles and declared: "If any Polish citizen does not consider himself a Pole, let him leave the country or let him be loyal to the hosts whose guest he happens to be."

And very close to the Church is Lech Walesa, the Solidarity chief. He is reportedly working on plans to start a Catholic party in the country. Apparently Walesa also dreams of patterning himself into an authoritarian leader like the pre-war despot of Poland, Pilsudski.

These are a few of the things which the Western-style free market is bringing to Poland. Not a pretty sight. It is far removed from the mirage of VCR's and shiny cars owned by every Pole.

The Polish workers need an alternative to both the old rotting order and the new corrupt system which has taken its place. That alternative is working class socialism, where the workers rule and the economy is run for the interests of labor, not for the greed of a few — whether they be bureaucrats or entrepreneurs. ■

## Why communism will survive the collapse of revisionism

Continued from front page

Western-style capitalist reforms called *perestroika* to deal with the Soviet economic crisis, but several years of this have resulted only in taking the country from crisis to disaster.

The economy is at a virtual standstill. And Moscow faces widespread discontent. In January and February this year, 9.1 million working days were lost due to strikes and ethnic conflicts — compared to 7.3 million in all of 1989. Still more strikes, and nationalist protests, are coming up.

And what's the answer of the Gorbachev regime? To create a U.S. or French-style presidency with enormous powers. Gorbachev wasn't even willing to face a popular vote, and he barely managed to get parliament to elect him. Meanwhile the Soviet ruling party is facing a split and its candidates are being trounced in local elections.

The promise of *glasnost* democracy is becoming threadbare, as Gorbachev prepares to meet the crisis with more and more emergency and dictatorial measures. He's preparing to repress the smaller nationalities; he's already saber-rattling against Lithuania. And how long will it be before troops are sent out against striking workers?

In the meantime, he's preparing a new economic program of free market reforms, which is akin to the plan being carried out in Poland. And no doubt it will have the same type of "success" — it dropped the standard of living of the Polish masses by 40% in a few weeks' time. (See page 7.)

This type of "revisionism" is indeed decaying around the world today, but that's not all there is to it. There is another force as well, who are in fact the true champions of communism.

### Workers' communism

The workers' communists are those who mobilize the working class as an independent class force against tyranny and capitalist exploitation. They fight for the goal of a world free from all privilege, greed and exploitation. In the fight for workers' freedom, they keep alive the liberating vision of generations of workers who have come before.

The ground from which workers'

communism arises is the working class struggle itself. And no matter how much the rich scream that they have done away with class struggle, it is inevitable.

Look around the world and you can see the workers in battle. In Korea and the Philippines. In South Africa and the Ivory Coast. In Haiti and Argentina and Central America. In Britain and Sweden. And here in the U.S. too some militant struggles have broken out despite the wet blanket of the trade union leaders.

And wherever the workers battle, the forces of communism will continue to be created. Not the fake communists of privilege and bureaucracy, but workers' communist parties which organize deep amidst the rank-and-file workers, which mobilize the toilers into a powerful revolutionary movement.

There are workers' communists in Nicaragua. These aren't the Sandinistas who are a middle class force, guided by dreams of class harmony. And they certainly aren't the "socialists" and "communists" who are in Violeta Chamorro's U.S.-backed right-wing capitalist camp. No, they are the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua. They are the ones who mobilized workers' militias against the old Somoza tyranny and afterwards stood for advancing the revolution to socialism.

In Iran, the Communist Party of Iran organizes in difficult underground conditions against the capitalist rule of the Islamic priests. It is entrenched as a fighting force among the toilers in the mountainous towns and villages of Kurdistan.

In the shantytowns and villages of the Philippines, the workers' communists of the Union of Proletarian Revolutionaries stand up against the Aquino regime of capitalists and landlords. They organize independent unions and promote class consciousness. And unlike the Maoist CPP which dominates the Filipino left, the workers' communists do not dream of a coalition with local capitalists, but fight for the rule of the toilers.

Here in the U.S., the Marxist-Leninist Party stands for workers' communism. In other places too, there are forces standing up for the same cause.

### What is revisionism?

So how is it that both such revolution-

ary forces and the Soviet and Eastern European bureaucrats speak in the name of communism?

What we are witnessing today is not the end of communism, but the end of an era in which much of what has passed for communism has been something else. The Marxist-Leninists call it revisionism, because it revised communist principles into bourgeois ideas and practices. The societies that are crumbling haven't been socialist, but capitalist. In these places the state controlled most of the economy, more so than usual in Western countries, but it was a capitalist state. We say capitalist because the workers as a whole haven't run the economy but a new strata of bureaucrats have. This ruling class lived in wealth and luxury, off the labor of the workers — just like the wealthy rulers of the "free world."

The Marxist-Leninists denounce these parties as revisionist also because they turned their backs on where they came from. Some of these forces were at one time workers' parties and they carried out heroic struggles against the exploiters. In the Soviet Union, the communist party led the 1917 socialist revolution in which the working class took powerful steps to build a new society free from the exploiters. But from the mid-30's on, the

leaders of the Soviet Union and the Communist International gave up on the revolutionary road and began the slide back into capitalism.

And since then, although these parties have kept communist names, symbols, and phrases, they have turned into their opposite. Where they ruled, they made communism into a bureaucratic tyranny and an object of hate and cynicism. And where they didn't rule, they sacrificed the workers' class struggle into the dead-end alley of collaborating with this or that section of the exploiters. Look at the CPUSA. For decades it's been an important part of the Democrats. You will find no shred of revolutionism or workers' class independence there.

For some decades, revisionism was riding high. But that era is coming to a close.

Meanwhile, the class struggle will continue to erupt. This will provide the soil for the new communism. Today the forces of workers' communism may yet be small and scattered, but they exist while the old forces of capitalism and revisionism decay. The day is coming when the working class will once again rise worldwide to challenge capitalism and all its apologists! ■

## Homeless take over abandoned houses

Homeless people launched actions to take over abandoned houses in Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Alexandria, Virginia on March 6. Two houses were seized on Detroit's east side. In New York, police blocked the activists from getting into the targeted building. In Alexandria, the police raided an occupied apartment and arrested everyone.

All the houses targeted are owned by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Last October,

when thousands of homeless marched on Washington, D.C., Bush's HUD chief Jack Kemp promised to turn over 10% of HUD's single-family properties to the homeless. But his words proved worthless.

So homeless people decided to take action themselves. They plan to keep up the takeovers till Kemp carries out his promise. The homeless have set May 1 to begin occupations of HUD-owned houses in cities all across the country. ■

### WOMEN

Continued from page 3

to be blockaded?" Other slogans included "Cops and Klan work hand in hand" and "Who will keep the clinics open, we will, we will."

The next day, March 10, the anti-abortion thugs of OR picketed abortion clinics throughout the Bay Area. The police, of course, didn't see the need to make corridors this time. They must have

been plumb worn out by all their fawning on Scheidler the day before. It was the activists who defended the clinics.

In Oakland, for example, OR was arrogant and aggressive, but the clinic defenders gave as good as they got and pushed back OR from the doors and patients. Meanwhile many clinic patients had made up their mind that OR wasn't going to mess with them and were militant themselves. ■





# The World in Struggle

## Strikes and protests spread in South Africa



Protesters in the streets of Bophuthatswana, March 7.

The racists in South Africa are promising to reform apartheid. And Nelson Mandela and the ANC leaders are preparing for talks with the regime. But the masses in South Africa are not waiting for deliverance through promises of deals at the top — they are taking action in the streets.

### Outbreaks in the "homelands"

In early March, revolts broke out in the "homelands" — the poor, segregated areas which South Africa set up as oversized concentration camps for blacks in the name of independent countries. On March 3 the military in the homeland of Ciskei overthrew the local government. The next day thousands of people took to the streets of Ciskei's capital. They demanded reincorporation into South Africa and protested against living conditions and police repression in Ciskei.

Within a few days revolts also broke out in the homelands of Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Gazankulu. With similar demands.

The masses of poor blacks in the homelands are enthusiastic to push forward the struggle against apartheid. But their efforts received only cold water from the ANC leaders, who worried that these revolts might upset their planned-for negotiations with De Klerk.

### Massacres by Buthelezi's minions

The province of Natal has become a battleground, which the Western press decries as mysterious "black-on-black violence." They call it a power struggle between different black factions who are supposedly all opposed to apartheid.

But the violence in Natal is the fault of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's terrorist forces, not of anti-apartheid activists. Buthelezi styles himself as leader of the Zulu people and heads up Inkatha, which is the most right wing of the black political forces. It has long had a cozy relationship with the apartheid regime, while other organizations were banned and hounded. For the past several years civil war has been raging in the black townships around Durban between the forces loyal to Buthelezi and the forces grouped around the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the ANC. Buthelezi considers the UDF and ANC as too radical, because they opposed apartheid while he sought to work with it. Inkatha thugs

have targeted anti-apartheid activists for attack and have assassinated hundreds of them. To defend themselves, youths grouped around the UDF have set up defense squads.

As negotiations between black political forces and the De Klerk regime now draw near, Buthelezi has again set his thugs upon the masses. At the heart of this new offensive lies his determination to demand sole control of Natal province for himself and the Zulu tribal elite he's part of.

Unfortunately the ANC/UDF leaders think they can strike a deal with Buthelezi, instead of going all out among the black masses in the country to isolate his anti-democratic drive. Mandela went to Durban to try to make peace with Buthelezi. And at a rally there, Mandela — in an unjust assessment of the situation — said that both sides are to blame. Shocked and outraged, many of Mandela's own supporters at the rally booed this declaration.

### The strike wave continues

The country is also being hit by a series of strikes by black workers. They are demanding wage raises to beat the rising cost of living and to integrate segregated facilities in the work places. There have even been strikes sparked by racist remarks from privileged white workers.

Tens of thousands of mine workers have launched "rolling strikes," marches and sit-ins. They are opposing discrimination and calling for an end to the migrant labor system which forces miners to live in dormitories, far removed from their families.

Health workers and teachers have also struck to protest the atrocious conditions blacks face in the country's schools and hospitals.

### Racist police murder demonstrators

While there has been a loosening of political repression in the country, which has encouraged the masses to struggle, this doesn't mean that the racist regime has become the friend of the people. Far from it.

On March 26 the South African police committed an outrage comparable with the worst excesses ever committed by the apartheid regime. In the township of Sebokeng, near Johannesburg, demon-

strators were marching to present a petition to the authorities protesting living conditions and demanding the resignation of town councilors. Police halted the march. The marchers agreed not to proceed. But then, without warning, the police fired into the crowd anyway. At least a dozen people were shot dead, and scores seriously injured.

As well, there have been a series of outrages against blacks by armed white vigilantes, who are seeking to launch a fascist backlash against the prospect of reforms in South Africa.

Because of the Sebokeng outrage, Mandela and the ANC leaders were forced to postpone upcoming talks with De Klerk. But this is only a squabble. The ANC still thinks that freedom will come through wheeling and dealing with De Klerk. They would like the masses to calm down. But the anti-apartheid masses are right to take matters into their own hands. How much freedom they achieve will depend on how active they are, and how far they can get organized. They are their own liberators. ■

## Rebellion in Britain against new tax

London became the scene of a fierce rebellion March 31 as demonstrators in the thousands clashed with police.

Over 40,000 people had rallied in Trafalgar Square to protest Prime Minister Thatcher's new poll tax. They set out to march through the streets, and as they passed by Thatcher's residence, fights broke out between protesters and the police. As mounted police pressed against the marchers, the anger among the masses grew. People set fire to office buildings, cars, and even the South African embassy. Many posh stores were trashed. Some 58 cops and 75 protesters were injured, and hundreds arrested.

The London battle was the latest clash over the poll tax. Earlier, mass demonstrations were organized across the length and breadth of Britain. In many cities the protesters invaded municipal council chambers, taking over city council meetings and trashing the government offices. Sharp fights with the police took place, as the demonstrators, many of them young, showered politicians with rocks and eggs.

Previously local governments were funded by property taxes, with the rich (who own more property) paying more than the poor. But, beginning on April 1, property taxes will be eliminated and replaced with a single poll tax (head tax). This is a once-a-year charge placed on every person between the ages of 18 and 65. This tax is completely regressive — rich and poor pay exactly the same.

When campaigning for the tax, Thatcher promised that it would not amount to very much. But for the past year the tax has been imposed in Scotland on a trial basis. And there, to make up for lost

property taxes, the municipal governments have had to charge a poll tax of about \$1,300 per person. This is much more than the average poor person in Britain can afford.

Like the Reaganite tax "reforms" in the U.S., Thatcher's new tax is simply a large-scale swindle to divert more money out of the pockets of the poor and into the moneybags of the rich. But the working people can only be squeezed so far before they rebel. ■



## MAY DAY EVENTS

### CHICAGO

**Demonstration**  
Saturday, April 28 1:00 pm  
18th Street and Union

**Meeting**  
6:30 pm  
301 N. Mayfield  
(near Lake and Austin)

### SEATTLE

**Meeting**  
Saturday, May 5 7:00 pm  
at C.A.M.P. 722 18th Ave.  
(not a sponsor)

### SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

**Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 1 evening  
U.C. Berkeley campus  
(room to be announced)

### BOSTON

**Meeting**  
Saturday, May 5 evening  
Place to be announced  
--Contact--  
P.O. Box 8934  
Boston, MA 02114