



No to imperialism, racism and hunger!

May First is International Working Class Day. It comes this year at a time when all the upper-class forces speaking in the name of the people have shown themselves to have no answers at all to the world problems. They can only bring the world more war, more prejudice between peoples, more cutbacks.

It is time for the workers all over the world to recognize that they themselves must stand up to transform this world. It is the working people who bear the cost of the economic crisis, and who suffer the casualties of war. It is they who are being called on to rise up in country after country to topple regimes, and who are called on to pull in their belts to rebuild the countries after the fighting is over. It is time that the workers put their own stamp on the results of these struggles.

A new world is being built. Old regimes are toppling. Old companies are going bankrupt. Whole regions are being transformed. But the new world will still have the same basic features of exploitation, racism and war unless the workers link arms to overthrow the old ruling classes.

The domestic cost of the war

American workers face paying the domestic cost of the Persian Gulf war. It won't be measured in dollars and cents, and it can't be covered by contributions from abroad. The real domestic cost is

the massive corruption, the outpouring of everything backward, that afflicts a country which has the utter misfortune to win an unjust, aggressive war.

With the end of the war in the Persian Gulf, the capitalists are congratulating themselves on killing tens of thousands of Iraqis at such a small price. They are shouting "we are number one."

Number one in weapons of mass destruction. Number one in the will to use them.

And Bush is proclaiming that the next step is to set the police loose to do in the streets what the army did in Kuwait. And the savage beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles reveals that, to a large extent, the police have already been

doing this.

Underneath the military triumph stands a system in decay.

Racism is growing. Budget cutbacks are devastating education, medical care, and safety inspections of industry. The so-called "safety net" is being torn to shreds. Less than one in three laid-off or

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L.A. beating one of many THE RACIST SYSTEM MUST GO!

"Down with racism, Gates must go!" That was the chant March 23 as more than 300 demonstrators picketed around the downtown headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Workers, high school students, and other activists shouted out their anger at the brutality of the LAPD and its chief, Daryl Gates.

This was the third weekend in a row in which hundreds of people had come out to protest at police headquarters. They have also marched on other police stations. And on March 14 more than 450 people confronted Chief Gates at a police commission hearing. The hearing was repeatedly disrupted as angry people rose to chant "Daryl Gates must go!" and "Go home, Gates!"

Protests have also broken out against racist police violence in a number of other cities around the country.

Gates must go

The demonstrations began shortly after



Marchers denounce racist police chief Gates outside LAPD headquarters

a video revealed a gang of white cops sadistically beating a black construction worker, Rodney King. Following standard procedure, the police had tried to cover

up the incident. But one sordid detail after another has gradually come out.

Police claimed that King's behavior

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MAY DAY EVENTS

CHICAGO

Demonstration
Sat., May 4 4 pm
18th St. and Union

Meeting
7:30 pm
301 N. Mayfield
(near Lake and Austin)

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Meeting
Wed., May 1 7 pm
ML Books & Periodicals
3232 ML King Way
Oakland

OTHER CITIES
To be announced

Build the movement against cutbacks!

A movement is breaking out across the country to fight the cutbacks against the workers and poor. State and municipal workers, hospital workers, teachers, welfare recipients, homeless people and the unemployed are going into action to defend jobs and basic social programs from the budget ax. In this issue we carry articles on the the protests that have erupted in a number of cities and states.

Solidarity

An important feature of the current protests is the solidarity being shown among different sections of the workers and poor.

The capitalist politicians are trying to split up the working people, making the government employees, the homeless,

the sick and aged compete over who will get some inadequate crumbs. In Michigan, for example, Governor Engler has actually threatened that if his layoffs and pay freeze for state workers is blocked, then he will drain all the funds from AFDC welfare.

Such high-handed blackmail cannot be tolerated. It is imperative that the better positioned unionized workers defend the less organized workers and poor. All working people must stick together in a united struggle against the entire cutback offensive.

No more cheap talk from the politicians!

It is also essential to build up this movement independent from both the

Republicans and the Democrats.

The Republicans are gloating over the cutbacks. And the current crises in the states and cities has been caused, in part, by a decade of budget cutting by the Reagan and Bush administrations. One study indicates, for example, that direct federal aid to local governments was cut by 52% between 1978 and 1989, plummeting from \$37 billion to \$18 billion.

The Democrats have gone along with Reagan and Bush every step of the way. Indeed, the current round of federal budget-cutting is based on the Gramm-

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See CUTBACKS

Make the rich pay for the budget crises!

New York workers declare 'No cutbacks! Tax the rich!'

20,000 people descended on the New York state Capitol Building in Albany March 19 to protest Governor Cuomo's proposed \$4.5 billion in budget cuts. Under the slogan "No cutbacks! Tax the rich!" state and municipal workers, health care workers, teachers, students, and poor people marched around the mall and rallied in front of the Capitol.

Over a hundred university students, facing \$500-a-semester tuition hikes, marched into the building demanding to see Governor Cuomo. The governor hid while police barred the doors leading to his office. In the clash between students and police, furniture was overturned and the glass doors were smashed. The police arrested eight of the students.

Cuomo and Dinkins lead attack on workers and poor

Back in 1984 Mario Cuomo won fame for his keynote speech to the national Democratic Party Convention attacking Reagan's cuts in social services. But now this apostle of liberalism is swinging the budget ax himself.

Cuomo proposes to cut \$4.5 billion from the budget to help close a deficit of some \$6 billion. The cuts include \$1 billion from health care, \$970 million from education, and tens of millions from housing, youth programs, child-care services, programs for the elderly and so forth. About 1,000 state workers have already been laid off. And another 17,000 state jobs are threatened, including 5,000 health care workers in metropolitan New York City alone.

New York's fiscal crisis is a result, in part, of the decade of Reagan and Bush cutbacks and the shifting of the burden of everything from welfare to highway maintenance on to the states. But the blame does not end there.

While Cuomo and co. have been denouncing Reaganite cutbacks in Washington, they themselves have been rolling back state taxes on the capitalist corporations and the wealthy. Ten years ago taxes on corporations accounted for over 9% of state revenues. Today they are only a little over 5%. Similar rollbacks have occurred for personal incomes in



20,000 workers and students protested in Albany against N.Y. state budget cuts

the higher brackets. Cuomo is now proposing tax increases of \$1.5 billion to help cover the deficit. But the tax system is so skewed in favor of the rich, that the increased tax burden will fall disproportionately on the working class.

Cuomo's slash-and-burn budget cutting is neither an aberration nor a temporary necessity. It is the logical conclusion to a fiscal policy of catering to the corporations and the rich — a policy followed by the Democrats as well as the Republicans.

It is fitting that — after spending all day hiding out from the demonstrators — Cuomo reappeared in the evening on the platform of a conference of "business leaders." And where was New York City's Democratic mayor during all of this? Dinkins declined an invitation to the protest march. Instead, he was up on the dais rubbing shoulders with Cuomo. Only a few hours before, he announced that the cuts planned for the city budget were being nosed up from \$3 billion to nearly \$4 billion.

Cuomo and Dinkins seem to be clear on whose interests they are defending.

Build a class movement

Unfortunately, the leaders of the March 19 protest were not so clear.

It was headed up by a bunch of union officials in conjunction with the New York State Legislature's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. These were some of the foremost supporters of the elections of Governor Cuomo and Mayor Dinkins. But now that the masses are up in arms against the Democratic Party big shots, they claim to oppose the cutbacks.

But all they are trying to do is rescue the Democratic Party from the anger of the masses.

Take, for example Dennis Rivera, the president of 1199 Hospital workers union and one of the protest leaders. He declared that, "The future of this country depends on rescuing the Democratic Party for the working class, the minorities and the less privileged." (*El Diario-La Prensa*, Feb. 27)

Ridiculous! The Democrats are another capitalist party, just like the Republicans. And Cuomo's budget proves it.

But Rivera himself is a vice-chairman of the New York State Democratic Party. He and his cronies don't want to see a class struggle against the capitalists and their parties. All he wants is to persuade the working class, the minorities, and the less privileged to restrict themselves to tinkering with the capitalist budget.

Their alternative to Cuomo's budget — called "Budget Equity" — has been offered by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. It calls for somewhat increased taxes on rich people, corporations, and banks, but the main theme is to "share the pain." The impoverished workers and laid-off and homeless are supposed to "sacrifice equally" with the wealthy capitalists lounging in their luxurious mansions. What rot! No, the issue is not "equality of sacrifice." Nor is it to elect politicians who will claim to represent equally the rich and the poor. Rather the issue is to defend and organize the workers and poor, and to make the capitalists pay for the crisis.

(Based in part on a March issue of the "New York Worker's Voice," paper of the MLP-New York.)



Demonstrators battled state troopers outside Governor Cuomo's office in Albany, March 19

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Engler "Scissorhands" denounced around Michigan



Michigan state employees protest in Detroit against budget cutbacks

At the end of February, thousands of state workers, welfare recipients and homeless people rallied across Michigan.

They protested against the state's savage
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See ENGLER

Make the rich pay for the budget crises!

ENGLER Continued from page 2

budget slashing. In Detroit, hundreds of angry workers marched in front of the state building. On March 20, a protest at the state building in Detroit launched a campaign to recall the newly-elected Republican governor, Engler "scissorhands." Seventy-five people also marched the next day in Royal Oak to denounce the budget cuts.

The budget slashing has already axed welfare benefits by 17% and other programs by 9.2%. And now Governor Engler is proposing further cuts to cover a \$1.1 billion budget deficit. As many as 8,000 state jobs may be eliminated, scheduled pay raises rescinded, 100,000 General Assistance and job corps recipients cut off completely, Medicaid payments slashed by 20%, clinics closed, parks sold off to private companies, and more.

State workers have begun to talk of strike action against the cuts. But the

UAW and other union leaders have opposed this. Instead, they are calling on workers to passively wait on lawsuits. But the courts have already thrown out four or five lawsuits against the cuts.

The union officials also promote the liberal Democrats as the alternative to Engler "scissorhands." But, while hassling with Engler over details, the Democrats are also in favor of slashing the benefits of the workers and poor. In fact, the first round of 9.2% across-the-board budget cuts was based on an agreement that former Democratic Governor Blanchard made last fall.

And the rich are making out like bandits. In the midst of the severe deficit crisis, Engler has proposed a 20% cut in school property taxes over three years. It is the capitalist corporations and the wealthiest households that will get most of the benefits. Some two-thirds of the tax cut would go to the businesses alone. And the wealthiest homeowners would get a disproportionate amount of the rest.

pay when they retired in 10, 15, or 20 years, after inflation had whittled it down so the money would be next to worthless. With this "the check is in the mail" plan, it then became possible to also include workers in such essential service sectors as the transit system, which cannot be

shut down one day a week. The final plan adopted by the legislature combined layoffs with the deferred pay scheme.

(Based on the March 14 issue of the "Boston Worker," paper of the MLP-Boston.)

School cutbacks protested in San Francisco

Shouting "Save Our Schools!" some 2,000 teachers, students, parents, and other activists marched through downtown San Francisco on March 15.

California's Governor Pete Wilson has proposed a \$2 billion cut in public school spending as part of his program to deal with a projected state deficit of up to \$10 billion. Layoff notices had already been sent out to 1,400 teachers and workers in San Francisco schools, another 2,100 in Los Angeles, and thousands more across the state.

The demonstrators shouted "Olive Pete the Pink [slip]!" as they marched to the offices of several elected officials, demanding that they defend public education.

Later that night, about 2,000 people

also protested at the John F. Kennedy High School in Richmond. Wilson has demanded that the Richmond School District in San Francisco suspend the contracts of the district's employees. The district is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. And Wilson has declared there will be no state financial help unless the contracts are rescinded. Teachers in some other school districts are also facing pressure to abandon agreed-to pay raises.

California ranks 45th among states in funding for public schools. It spends \$400 less per child than the national average. Wilson's proposal would reduce this by another \$300 per pupil. A statewide march for education has been called for April 3 in Sacramento.

Boston students and parents fight school cuts



Thousands of students rally at Boston City Hall against cuts in education

More than 1,500 parents, teachers, and students in the Boston public schools demonstrated March 9 in downtown Boston. They protested Mayor Flynn's \$48 million slash in the school budget and his plans for further cuts in the wake of state cutbacks by Governor Weld. Flynn's program will lead to layoffs of hundreds of teachers, the expansion of class size to over 30 students in a classroom, and the elimination of after-school sports and other programs. High school students protested again on March 15.

The Democrat Flynn complains that he has been forced to such action because of the cuts by Republicans at the state and federal level. There's some truth in this. But when Flynn has done precious little to oppose those cutbacks. He was an avid supporter of Bush's war on Iraq and spent a ton of money on police overtime to attack people who came out to protest the war. And he has followed in the wake of the Democrats in Washington and Massachusetts who are helping the Republicans back away at the people's expense.

For example, one of Governor Weld's money-saving schemes was to lay off state workers in non-essential services for one day per week for ten weeks. But the Democratic-controlled state legislature came up with a plan to save even more money at the workers' expense. Their

"deferred pay" scheme involved forcing the workers to work without any pay for one day per week for ten weeks. The workers would supposedly get the lost

R.I. workers protest payless paydays

All across Rhode Island, angry state workers picketed, rallied, and demonstrated March 8 against being forced to bear the brunt of the state's financial crisis.

On that day, Democratic Governor Bruce Sundlun shut down government services and sent home 19,000 state workers. This was the first of ten days in

the next four months when workers will be sent home without pay.

Sundlun claims that the payless paydays — along with the permanent elimination of 600 jobs, deep cuts in social programs, and increased taxes that disproportionately hit the working masses — are needed to deal with the state's \$222 million deficit.

No to Illinois' austerity budget

The March 22 issue of the *Chicago Workers' Voice* denounces the proposed austerity budget of Illinois' Republican Governor Edgar.

Some 4,400 state jobs are to be eliminated and medical benefits cut for all state workers. Heating assistance is to be cut for 200,000 poor families. General Assistance grants would be paid for only six months of the year, affecting 78,000 people in Chicago alone. Medicaid coverage for the working poor would be eliminated, affecting about 25,000 people

in just Chicago. And more. On the other hand, more prisons are to be built.

"This certainly shows the priorities of the government," the *Voice* declares. "Bush and the Pentagon had an entire hospital built, complete with equipment and staff, in the Saudi Arabian desert. Thousands of doctors and nurses were called up. It is amazing what health care the government is capable of providing when it considers it a worthy cause."

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Communism and the budget crisis

Reagan and Bush love to ridicule the so-called "socialism" of the Soviet Union for its enormous over-bloated bureaucracy, its high military spending, and its enormous governmental waste. At the same time, they have held out the promise that their style of "free market" capitalism will "get the government off our backs."

This is monumental hypocrisy. Oh yes, the bureaucratic system in Russia — which is actually state-capitalism, not socialism — weighs down like a ton of bricks on the masses. But it is also true that the weight of feeding the government monster in the U.S. has continued to grow by leaps and bounds. Just look at the federal deficit. Under Bush and Reagan the deficit has not gone away. Oh no, it is expected to reach record heights of \$318 billion this year.

For Reagan and Bush, the talk of "getting government off our backs" has just been a deceptive excuse to slash social benefit programs for the masses while cutting the tax burden for the capitalists. Meanwhile, military spending has been pushed to record "peace time" heights and so has the interest payments on the government's loans to the Wall Street financial sharks, the banks and the wealthy. They have not "cut the fat" from government. They've merely provided relief for the capitalists by shifting the burden further onto the working people.

The fact is that neither the so-called "free market" capitalism of Reagan and Bush nor the state-capitalism of so-called "socialism" in Russia is able to cut the waste or relieve the masses of the oppressive weight of the overgorged government machine. Whether it is the capital-

ist parasites in the West or the fatcat bureaucrats of Russia, they must build up both the military and bureaucratic features of the state machine in order to hold down and control the working masses in their own countries and to protect their spheres of influence around the world.

Only workers' socialism can really cut the oppressive fat from the government and eventually lead to communism and the elimination of the state machine altogether.

A workers' revolution — in overthrowing the capitalist political power and establishing the rule of the working class — can take immediate steps to relieve the burden.

Take, for example, the raiding of the treasury by the banks and financial tycoons. For this year alone it is estimated that the "interest on the public debt" of the federal government will reach \$286 billion. (Fiscal 1992 Budget, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, Feb. 9, 1991, p. 355) That is more than 20% of the entire federal budget. The bulk of that money is tribute exacted from the government by the wealthy capitalists. One of the first steps of the workers' power will be to eliminate that tribute and radically transform the entire banking and financial system. The revolution aims to suppress all private banks and financial institutions and to centralize the credit and banking systems into a national bank in the hands of the workers. This will give the newly established workers' power leverage to direct the economy towards meeting the needs of the masses, instead of serving the profit drive of the capitalists.

Or take the question of the huge U.S. military machine. This year "national defense" spending costs about \$300 billion, more than 21% of the federal budget. U.S. imperialism needs this overbloated military machine because it wants to be the policeman of the entire world. And, as well, it must stay prepared to suppress eruptions from the working people at home. But the working class has no interest in aggressive war against oppressed working people in other countries and will need no military forces for that purpose. With workers' power military forces, for the first time, will really only be used for "defense." This will require nothing like the present gargantuan military, either in size or character. Here again, the workers' power will mean a big savings.

Still more, the socialist revolution will begin cutting the fat of the state bureaucracy.

As Karl Marx, the founder of communism, explained, "It begins the *emancipation of labor* — its great goal — by doing away with the unproductive and mischievous work of the state parasites, by cutting away the spring which sacrifices an immense portion of the national produce to the feeding of the state monster on the one side, by doing, on the other, the real work of administration, local and national, for workingmen's wages. It begins therefore with an immense saving, with economical reform as well as political transformation." (First draft of "The Civil War in France," in the latter part of the subsection "The Character of the Commune," April-May 1871)

Doing the work of administration at workers' wages — now that is a revolu-

tion against the overbloated bureaucracy. The workers' power can start by getting rid of the really fat, cushy executive positions in the bureaucracy. And it will move towards eliminating the difference in pay between ordinary workers and managers, and to the working masses themselves more and more taking over the self-administration of all the affairs of the society.

And this is only the beginning. As the productive forces are freed from the fetters of the profit system — which has led to economic crisis on the average of every five to six years since World War II — the masses can be put to work. Unemployment, welfare, and so forth can be reduced to a minimum. Of course society will have to pay for jobs, decent education, child care, health care and so forth so that people can actually work. But the additional labor and increased productivity gained will more than account for that cost. And gradually the hours of labor can be reduced so that the masses have time to learn to do other work, to end the separation of mental from manual labor, and among other things will be free to spend time in administering society.

As everyone becomes workers, an end will be put to the division into classes and to class strife. The state machine will no longer be needed as a weapon of the class struggle, and it will wither away.

Neither Reagan and Bush, nor Gorbachev, can solve their budget crises or get the government off our backs. Only communism holds that promise. Only by the workers taking matters into their own hands can the problem be solved. ■

CUTBACKS

Continued from front page

Rudman agreement between the two parties that there will be no raise in funding for one social program unless funding is cut from another.

Meanwhile, in a number of cities and states it is the Democratic Party bigshots who are directly wielding the budget ax. Look at New York, for example, where the presidential hopeful Mario Cuomo is heading up a program of cutbacks for the workers and poor to protect the tax breaks of the capitalist corporations and the wealthy.

Many of the union officials and "respectable" minority leaders stand at the front of the demonstrations and preach faith in the Democratic Party or talk about reforming it. We cannot agree. The Democratic Party cannot be a tool for the working people. It is a capitalist party, just like the Republicans. Our movement will become strong the quicker we do away with any illusions in the Democrats. We need a movement of the working masses, independent of the political bigwigs and capitalist fakers.

Make the rich pay!

We must put on our banners: "Make the capitalists pay for the budget crisis!"

Time and again we are told that there is no money to pay for jobs and social benefits for the masses. But it is just not true. The government always finds the money to bail out the S&Ls and banks

or to fund aggressive wars against Iraq and Panama or to build more prisons and maintain the police forces.

The issue is spending in whose interests — relieving the suffering of the masses or propping up financial sharks and U.S. imperialist spheres of interest around the world?

The federal, state and local governments serve the interests of the rich. Indeed, another source of the current crisis is the tax breaks that have been systematically handed out to the capitalist corporations and the wealthy. For years the big monopolies have been holding the state budgets for ransom — threatening to shut down and move elsewhere if they are not given huge tax incentives. In fact in some states, like Massachusetts and Michigan, even in the midst of severe fiscal crisis, the governors are planning to hand over further tax breaks to the business people.

Some liberal Democrats are pushing for increased taxes to "limit" the budget cuts. But they are simply joining with the Republicans to increase taxes on the working people. A few liberals may sugarcoat it with a slight increase on taxes on the rich, but this turns out repeatedly to be a fraud.

The present system is in crisis. Its promise of prosperity for all is being torn to shreds in the depressing rounds of more cuts, more fees, and more police. We must build the fight against cutbacks into a class struggle against the whole rotting system. ■

Bank of New England — another bailout boondoggle

Do you wonder why there's no money for the unemployed or homeless, for health care or the schools? Well, a lot of money is being given away in the bailout of the banks.

The latest boondoggle is with the Bank

of New England (BNE). In January the failing BNE was taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Now the FDIC is selling off the bank for a song.

In the first place, the FDIC is sepa-

rating off the BNE's bad loans — including \$5-6 billion in mostly nonperforming real estate loans. The FDIC itself will take over the bad loans, although it will continue to pay the bank a fee for managing them.

With the bad loans gone, the new owner of the BNE will end up with the healthiest bank in New England and one of the strongest in the country.

And what's the price? The FDIC is asking only \$750 million, the amount the FDIC has so far paid out of its Bank Insurance Fund to bolster BNE. An executive for one of the companies

bidding for BNE exclaimed, "It's an incredible deal. You are almost certain to make money. The question is how much." In fact, Wall Street analysts report that the new owner could turn around and resell the bank within a few years for a 24-40% profit.

But then who pays for the billions of dollars in bad loans? Who else, the workers and poor. We'll pay through taxes and also through further cuts in spending on social programs — which the capitalist politicians will demand claiming there is just no money to be had. ■

The S&L rip-off continues

The House passed a bill on March 13 to pump another \$30 billion into the bailout of savings and loan associations. A similar bill was passed earlier by the Senate.

The Resolution Trust Corporation said the new money will allow it to operate another six and a half months. It plans to take over and sell off another 125 failed S&Ls in that period. And then it plans to ask for another \$50 billion.

So far the S&L bailout has cost \$180 billion — \$80 billion from Congress and another \$100 billion borrowed from

private lenders that will have to be paid back with interest. It is estimated that the final cost, including interest over the next 30 years, will rise to about \$500 billion.

The bailout makes it all too clear what the priorities of the Republicans and Democrats really are. They always seem to find billions to prop up the wealthy banking tycoons. But when it comes to the growing army of laid off, poor, and homeless working people, well, they have to suffer cutbacks to "reduce the budget deficit." ■

ILLINOIS

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keeping the monopoly on Mideast oil and maintaining their empire. But the poor are not a priority. They can die. There is no other conclusion when you look at the new state budget."

The *Voice* goes on to point out, "The fight against these new measures of poverty is ultimately a struggle over what kind of society we want to live in. We need a new society that can uproot poverty altogether. Let's build up a revolutionary opposition to the capitalist system, so that each generation does not

have to face economic crisis and poverty, so that we can do away with capitalism altogether." ■

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Strikes and workplace news

Justice for Janitors wins a round

1,000 janitors won a contract at the end of February with Bradford Building Service, the largest non-union janitorial service in the Los Angeles area.

The contract covers workers in 75 buildings in downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Glendale, Burbank and the Westside. It will mean raises of as much as a dollar an hour and family health insurance — a first for many of the workers.

Last year, L.A. janitors resisted police

attacks — in which 20 workers were hospitalized — to win their strike at 13 buildings run by International Service System. That strike won janitors their first major contract in L.A. and frightened the other janitorial services. This year, when the janitors threatened to strike Bradford, it quickly rushed to the bargaining table.

The "Justice For Janitors" organizing campaign has spread into 14 other major cities around the country. ■

Weirton Steel workers protest layoffs

More than 100 workers protested outside of Weirton Steel offices in Weirton, West Virginia in mid-March. They demanded action to restore the jobs of 125 workers just laid off by the company. City cops and Weirton Steel's private police force blocked the entrance to the mill. And management refused to talk with the workers.

In the mid-1980's then-Governor John D. Rockefeller IV came up with an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)

for the mill in which workers gave up enormous concessions and, in return, were supposed to become its owners. Now workers are asking "How can we own the mill and still be laid off?"

The fact is that ESOPs like Weirton don't change them from being capitalist companies. They continue to be run with the sole aim of making profits — but now the profits go to a wealthy board of directors. While laying off workers, the company president Herbert Elish is

giving himself a \$50,000 a year raise. Other members of the Weirton Board of

Directors voted themselves an \$800 a year salary increase. ■

Kansas City food workers fight takebacks

For four weeks some 2,500 workers have been on strike against the Food Barn, Inc. in Kansas City. On March 3, after workers rejected new concessions, the company unilaterally implemented them anyway.

Workers declared "we won't take it any more" and went on strike. In the last

two contracts, workers have given up \$48 million in concessions. They have had no wage increase for seven years. This year Food Barn management demanded another \$27 million in takebacks, especially demanding the right to replace full-time workers with part-timers. ■

Bush threatens veto on bill to protect striking workers

One of the AFL-CIO's top legislative priorities is to get Congress to pass a bill barring employers from hiring permanent replacements for striking workers.

But Lynn Martin, Bush's new Secretary of Labor, warned that Bush will veto it. She claimed the legislation would give unions too much power and upset the balance between labor and management. With a veto, Bush wants to maintain the present balance in which concessions and takebacks are being rammed down the

workers' throats.

But the truth is that no law by itself will tip the balance in favor of the workers unless they are willing to fight, and to go beyond legal restrictions, to defend their own class interests. Unfortunately, today's union leaders are not about to do that. They will whine about this or that law, but in the end they keep selling the workers down the river in the name of maintaining the balance of "labor-management cooperation." ■

No to imperialism, racism and hunger!

Continued from front page

"discouraged" workers gets unemployment benefits. Welfare programs for the injured, the unfortunate and the underprivileged are cut, while hundreds of billions are to be given to the banks.

The link of imperialism abroad with repression and racism and decay at home is standing out in full force.

Who stands for progress?

But there is more to America than exploitation and militarism and racism. There are the masses of people who are profoundly shocked and angry at these developments. The ground war in the Persian Gulf was an unusually fast and rapid slaughter, but the anti-war movement also had an unusually fast and rapid development. It swept the country, embracing more than a million people in a short period and despite few American casualties. It brought forth a new generation of protesters, and it persisted in the face of the offensive of flag-waving chauvinism and the attempt of the news media to make each protester feel that she or he was the only one opposed to this war.

And now that the war is over, these protesters are pondering what happened. Many of them feel that they must continue their struggle in the other movements that have arisen to combat the right-wing and capitalist wave.

Over the last year, there was the movement in support of women's rights, which defended abortion rights in the face of the growth of religious bigotry. Many people are upset and joining protests and marches against racist attacks. Workers are still stunned by the ferocity of the offensive which is torturing them with overwork while throwing millions out of their jobs, but discontent with the do-nothing union bureaucrat policy is growing.

Lessons of the past

The prospects for a new movement are growing. But this movement will not simply be a repeat of the old movements. It comes up in the 1990's, where the world is going to look a lot different from the past. And it will only grow when millions and millions of people reconsider the experience of the past, the experience of trade union struggles, anti-racist struggles, anti-war protests, women's rights struggles, and see that the working masses have to build a movement in their own right.

We need a movement independent of the capitalist exploiters, whether in liberal, humanitarian or religious garb. All the old would-be saviors, the liberal Democrats, the pro-establishment leaders, the benevolent or not-so-benevolent tyrants of the world, have failed. It is time to raise the banner of the class struggle of the oppressed in their own interests.

The Persian Gulf war has disgraced many of the would-be saviors. The Democratic and liberal politicians, who posed as the voice of conscience, are now running over each other to pledge allegiance to the new world order and kiss the hem of Schwartzkopf's uniform.

The pro-capitalist labor union officials have done nothing to stem the tide of concessions and cutbacks. Even the size of the unions is fading away, especially among the private sector workers.

For workers' socialism, not revisionist state-capitalism

Most of the Eastern European and other state-capitalist regimes that posed as "socialist" have either toppled or are in a painful state of crisis. Decades ago the most advanced revolutionaries posed the need to criticize these regimes as not communist, but revisionist. In the face of mockery from the university scholars, imperialist media, and apologists for the

state-capitalists, they insisted that Marxism-Leninism had nothing to do with the revisionist regimes.

Today it is more essential than ever to carry forward the anti-revisionist critique and bring it to the masses. This can help inspire the confidence of the working masses in their power to transform society. This can light the way forward for the next wave of revolution in the world. And as surely as capitalism keeps bringing forward Bushs and Réagans, racists and strikebreakers, it also calls forth revolutionary movements to overthrow it. Capitalism may seem firmly in the saddle today, but so did apartheid South Africa, or the state-capitalist regimes, not so many years ago.

For revolutionary theory

The experience of the nineteenth century revolutions, and of the first attempts at working class organization, gave rise to Marxism. And today, the complicated experience of the past shows the need to bring Marxism-Leninism to the masses. Revolutionary theory sheds light on what is needed to build workers' socialism, and the eventual classless communist society. It makes sense of the agonizing changes of the present-day world. It is not a set of ready-made prescriptions, but a framework which has to be continually developed in light of the new questions of the movement. Without such a framework, without conscious consideration of the nature of the entire system confronting us, the mass struggle will be compelled to go through ever more painful detours and zigzags.

It is up to the oppressed to turn the old world upside down

So this May Day, despite the growing threats from the bourgeoisie, let the working class approach the future with confidence. There is something in this

world besides everlasting capitalist exploitation. There is something other than repeated wars and racial prejudices and renewed tyrannies. There is the class struggle of the working class. There is the prospect of building a new world, a new society.

To defend themselves from starvation and repression today, and to prepare a revolution tomorrow, the working masses must unite. We must build our own organizations of struggle, and our own independent party of revolutionary struggle and communism. Through organization, through struggle on behalf of all the oppressed, through breaking away from the exploiters in all their guises, the working class and the progressive activists can prepare to wrest the helm of the new world that is coming into being from the old forces that know nothing better than religious bigotry, imperialism, and the dog-eat-dog search for profits.

U.S. imperialism, out of the Persian Gulf!

Down with this growing racism!

Make the capitalists pay for the economic crisis!

Workers and oppressed, get organized in the class struggle! ■

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THE RACIST SYSTEM MUST GO!

Continued from front page

suggested "drug or alcohol abuse." They apparently were only doing their duty for President Bush's "war on drugs." But then medical tests, conducted shortly after King's arrest, showed no sign of drugs or alcohol. Police claimed King was speeding at 115 mph. But a Highway Patrol tape showed he was doing at most 65 mph when the police chased him. The cops lied when they claimed that King suffered only contusions and abrasions — he is recovering from skull and facial fractures, a broken leg, massive bruises, burns from a Taser stun gun, and possible permanent eye and brain damage. It has also come out that there were 21 officers present at the beating and not 15 as was originally reported. And audio tapes of patrol car broadcasts have revealed police officers sadistically joking over this and previous racist beatings.

Unable to deny this racist beating, Chief Gates turned to defending the overall police department. This was just "an aberration" he claimed. But one case after another of police brutality has been pouring out. (A few are mentioned in other articles below.) And Gates himself is well known to have presided over and encouraged the racism.

Gates has been the chief of the LAPD for 13 years and is notorious for racist slanders against blacks, Latinos, immigrants, and others. He justified chokehold police murders of African-American

cans by claiming blacks are not like "normal people." He called Latinos "lazy." He blamed the flood of undocumented immigrants into the country for the death of some police officers. The list goes on and on. In fact, Gates even told a Senate committee last year that casual drug users "ought to be taken out and shot." If that was not encouraging his police officers to carry out beatings like that of Rodney King, then it is hard to see what is.

Gates is an inveterate right-wing racist. And there is no question that demonstrators are right to demand that he, and all the policemen involved, be fired and tried for their racist crimes.

The racist system must go!

But no one should think that getting rid of Gates and a few other cops will put an end to the racism and police brutality. The savagery displayed in L.A. has been duplicated in cities all across the country. And it is being encouraged from the top reaches of the government.

Indeed, President Bush himself has rushed to the defense of Gates. He praised Gates for being an "all-American hero," and pleaded that he is "entitled to a credible hearing." This is not so surprising from the man who vetoed the civil rights bill and portrayed black people as criminals in his Willie Horton election ads. But it shows that the racism does not begin and end with Gates. It is



Protesters shout in anger at L.A. Police Commission hearing

being systematically organized from the White House and Supreme Court down through the local governments. It is an essential part of the U.S. establishment.

From the days of slavery up to the present Supreme Court rulings which open the flood gates to job discrimination, racism has been a consistent tool of the U.S. ruling class. It is used to hold down the pay and living conditions of African-Americans, Latinos, and other oppressed minorities so the capitalists may super-exploit them. And it is a poison used to split up the working class and weaken its struggle against the exploiters.

Today, when the capitalists are being shaken by economic crisis and there is growing unrest among the masses, the ruling class is unleashing racist police terror to slap down the masses in the ghettos and barrios. It is the opening edge of police repression which can be increasingly turned against strikers and homeless protesters and anti-war demonstrators.

All working people and progressive activists must stand against this racism. We must not only get rid of Gates but also target the whole racist system.

Not just a matter of an individual

Unfortunately various liberal Democrats and respectable black politicians have leaped to the front of the protests

to narrow their focus and channel the discontent back into the fold of the racist system.

Jesse Jackson promotes the dismissal of Gates like a panacea to exorcise the racist evil. John Conyers has called for Bush's racist Justice Department — the one that pushed the Supreme Court, for example, to rule for job discrimination — to "investigate" the racist police. The NAACP and other "respectable" black bourgeois are calling for the racist police to give themselves "sensitivity training" and to perhaps add some civilian politicians to the "review boards."

But none of this minor tinkering with the system can mean much unless the masses are brought into the streets and are organized to resist every step of the racist crusade. Each of these little cure-alls ends up taking the defense of justice out of the hands of the masses and leaving them to sit waiting passively for some bureaucrat, or at most some liberal Democrat, to do the right thing. They mean that once the protests die down, everything can turn back to business as usual.

The whole history of the fight against racism in the U.S. has shown that even elementary justice has only been won when the masses resisted the police and other racist attacks, and organized sit-ins, demonstrations, and strikes. Unleash a storm of protests, from L.A. to Washington, that will shake the establishment's racist crusade.



Videotape scene of LAPD thugs brutalizing Rodney King

Samoans protest L.A. cops



500 Samoan-Americans protested the police murder of two Samoan-American brothers in Los Angeles County on March 12. A day earlier, students at El Camino College also staged a protest of the murder of Italia Tualafalei and his brother Porvi.

Italia was an honors student at the

college and a founder of the school's Pacific Islander Club. His brother was a warehouse worker. The men were shot 20 times, 13 times from behind. Demonstrators denounced the long history of police harassment, abuse and "unresolved" murders of Samoan-Americans.

Immigrants resist L.A. police abuse

On March 20, protesters converged at the Los Angeles Criminal Courts building to denounce the trial of an immigrant who was arrested in a protest

against police brutality last May.

The May 26 demonstration demanded the closing of the INS (Immigration and Nationalization Service) Pico-Union

detention camp, an end to police barricades in the community and an end to police brutality against immigrants. The demonstration was attacked by the Los Angeles Police Department Anti-Terrorist Division. Several arrests and beatings took place.

In the past ten months over 70 people have been attacked and arrested in protests against the Pico-Union INS camp. Now the first immigrant arrested has come to trial. In addition to being

charged with "Felony Battery on an Officer" he also is charged under a seldom used statute that makes it a felony to be in the vicinity of an "insurrection against the authority of the police."

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles City Council has also made public its plan for "Operation Cal-de-Sac" — permanent barricades and police occupation of the La Centroamericana neighborhood and other impoverished sections of Los Angeles.

Racist cops on trial in Long Beach

A trial is also under way in Long Beach, California of police who slammed a black man onto the hood of a car and through a glass window in January, 1989.

The man, Don Jackson, is a retired officer who set out to prove the racism in the department. An NBC camera crew filmed the entire incident.

Jesse Jackson kneels before Bush and his war

In March, Jesse Jackson published an open letter to President Bush appealing for the passage of the civil rights bill. (*Los Angeles Times*, March 16) But in doing so Jackson rushed to prostrate himself before Bush's massacre of Iraqis and to wave the flag of loyalty to the exploiters' imperialist system.

"With the the stunning victory of our troops in the Persian Gulf, you have the support of a grateful people..." Jackson did not notice that the "stunning victory" was no more than a brutal bombing of civilians and the massacre of retreating troops. And he seems to have missed the

Continued on next page
See JACKSON

DOWN WITH RACISM!

David Duke denounced in Boston

More than 600 people turned out in Boston March 28 to denounce David Duke, the ex-KKK wizard who is presently the leader of the National Association for the Advancement of White People and a Louisiana State Representative.

The black elite — including the NAACP, the Nation of Islam, and black columnists in the bourgeois media — told people to stay away and let Duke speak. But that would only encourage the racists. So the MLP and other leftists put out leaflets and mobilized the masses to protest.

Once Duke was in the hall, the protesters rushed to the windows and kept up a steady barrage of slogans like: "Death to the Klan! Racist scum go home!" and "David Duke, you son of a Bush" and "He couldn't give a speech without police protection!"

Meanwhile inside the hall about one-fourth of the audience was anti-Duke protesters. They disrupted the meeting with slogans and yells and effectively kept Duke from being heard. At one point they managed to open a window so that slogans from outside helped drown out the racist speech. The police grabbed and threw out many of the protesters and at

Boston protest vs. police murder of Puerto Rican youth

At community meetings and the recent rally against KKK leader David Duke, Boston activists have kept up the protest of the murder of Hector Morales.

Two Boston cops gunned down the unemployed Puerto Rican youth in a shoot-out last Thanksgiving weekend. Following the shooting they drove their cars around the neighborhood shouting "Cops 1, Spics 0." Despite neighborhood protests Mayor Flynn came out in support of the cops.

The police claimed that Hector was the leader of a vicious drug gang. But while Hector was no angel, he and his friends were not a criminal gang. The real reason police went after him was that Hector stood up to them and wanted to help his people to fight oppression.

Last summer, he organized X-men and

least three were taken to jail. Duke was invited to Boston by Ford Hall Forum, a prestigious bourgeois lecture series associated with Northeastern University. They claim to be only interested in free speech and the airing of all points of view — but what they promoted was racism. Duke was also given extensive coverage by the bourgeois media. He was interviewed by Channel 2 public TV. He was put on a WHDH talk show. And the *Boston Globe* carried a four-page interview and history of him.

The rich are lavishing free publicity on Mr. Duke because they agree with everything he stands for. His program is to viciously attack the poor, immigrants and minorities, to scapegoat them for the economic and social crises caused by the rich. He declares that as governor of Louisiana he will eliminate welfare spending and build more prisons. The campaign of the rich to glorify Duke as a "charismatic folk hero" is part of their reactionary offensive against the working class and people.

Working people must combat these lies through mass actions and confrontations such as took place in Boston. ■

other neighborhood youth into a protest to demand jobs for unemployed teenagers. Hector had also been involved in organizing the painting of a mural promoting a fight against racism and poverty and promoting Latino pride. And he had repeatedly denounced police for harassing the youth on street corners and in the parks. It was because Hector stood up for his rights and the rights of working and poor people, that the police regarded him as a "trouble maker." Twice in August, and again in October, the police picked up Hector and abused and threatened him. It was against this background of police gangster tactics that the shoot-out occurred.

(Based on the March 14 "Boston Worker," paper of the MLP-Boston.) ■

JACKSON Continued from prev. page

fact that more than one million people took to the streets in the U.S. to protest against the war. Like other liberal Democrats, Jackson has been swept up in the patriotic war fever and is trying to prove that he's as loyal to Bush as the right-wing bigots who cried "nuke 'em all!"

But Jackson continues "you have the support of a grateful people, and the opportunity and obligation to use this moment to keep America strong, to make America better."

Bush, from his racist point of view, is doing just that. A few days before Jackson's letter, Bush had just declared, "We stood by our troops, and today it's time to stand up for America's prosecutors and police." For George Bush and the powers-that-be, keeping America strong means standing up for Chief Gates and the racist LAPD. It means turning from the Pentagon's war abroad to a police war on the minorities at home.

That is clear to anybody who has had the where-with-all to think about it. But

Jackson covers that up. He pretends that Bush's "support our troops" nausea meant the president actually cared about the safety and well-being of the ordinary soldiers and, therefore, should want to help them with civil rights once they return home. But Bush never had any concern except to use the children of minorities and working people as cannon fodder to protect the American oil empire. And at home his concern is to protect the same exploitative system from the anger growing up among minorities and working people.

Jackson knows this, but he is an apologist for the system. He is a spokesman for the black elite who talk about helping out the masses only to use them as a lever to achieve their own ambitions for government positions and seats on the corporate boards. Jackson has couched his appeal for civil rights in flag-waving patriotism because he wants to prove to the capitalist class the black elite will be as loyal defenders of the system as Bush. ■

Latinos denounce police murder in New York City

Demonstrators protested March 20 against the brutal murder of a young Latino man in New York City.

Five New York City cops dragged 21-year-old Federico Pereira from a car he was sleeping in, threw him in the streets, handcuffed both hands and an ankle behind his back, kicked and beat him for 15 minutes, and then strangled him to death.

The official inquiry — which was based

only on the cops' own account — absolved the officers of any wrongdoing. They claimed Federico died of a cocaine-induced outburst in which he beat his own head on the pavement.

Only after three young men reported witnessing the attack were the officers charged and the lies exposed. A medical examiner also ruled death as homicide from asphyxiation and rejected the drug subterfuge. ■

SOVIET Continued from page 12

Gorbachev came to power with the program of reviving the economy by loosening up state-capitalism and making the transition to a private-market economy.

The fiasco of perestroika

Perestroika (restructuring) was Gorbachev's plan for converting to private-market capitalism. After six years, perestroika has led to disaster. The country's GNP dropped 14% this past year, and the state planning agency predicts a much greater drop for 1991. They also predict an unemployment rate of 11% for this year. General across-the-board price hikes are due to begin April 2. These will mean a tripling in the price of bread and meat, a doubling in the price of milk and sugar, and a rise in other prices by 30-60%.

The question is not whether things will get worse, but how bad they can get. Gorbachev insists on going ahead with conversion to private-market capitalism in a five-year plan. This is the plan that state planners themselves admit will introduce massive unemployment along with massive price hikes. Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian republic and present darling of the Western media, wants an even faster conversion, a 500-day plan that will emulate the "shock therapy" carried out in Poland. Yeltsin plans to carry out such a plan in the Russian republic even if it is not done in the rest of the Soviet Union.

In the capitalist Soviet Union, just like in the United States, the voice of the workers is suppressed. The debate is whether to cut wages fast or even faster; no one considers the plight of the workers. The debate is over how fast prices should rise and workers suffer; no one considers attacking the interests of the fat-cat bureaucrats or the rising wealthy private capitalists.

It is the miners who are trying to inject the needs of the working class into the national debate. The extent to which they will succeed will depend on how well organized they are, and that they avoid getting sucked into support for one or another of the bourgeois political trends vying for power.

Problems with the miners' organizations

The original call for the miners' strike was issued by leaders of the Independent Union of Miners (NPG). The NPG claims to have 80,000 members out of the Soviet Union's 1.2 million coal miners. But the strike is now supported by many other workers, including those in the official, CP-recognized union. In some localities local leaders of the CP-led union are coordinating strike action with the NPG.

The NPG was formed last fall. Some

of its leaders were trade union leaders who had come to the U.S. on a 1990 tour paid for by the U.S. Information Agency. They got to hobnob with AFL-CIO leaders and learn the AFL-CIO way of doing things — which means selling out the workers for the greater glory of private capitalism.

NPG leaders seem to be taking the lead in pushing for political demands in the strike — for Gorbachev's resignation, for breaking up the coal industry into locally controlled mines (a step to privatization), etc. They are trying to bring the mass of workers into a movement for private-market capitalism, as Lech Walesa and the Solidarity leaders did in Poland.

But aside from the NPG leaders themselves, the mass of miners are fed up with Gorbachev. Gorbachev settled the 1989 coal strike by promising to deliver all kinds of goods to the coal miners. While the miners were hot, he made a show of delivering some; but afterwards the efforts faded, and since then the economy has grown worse — much worse.

Many miners, including many members of the NPG, do not agree with the transition to private-market capitalism. They are not enthusiastic about Yeltsin. But they are fed up with Gorbachev, they are fed up with the ruling Communist Party, and they insist that as a first step the central government must be dismantled and the CP's power broken.

The latest example of this came in conjunction with Gorbachev's ban on the March 28 mass demonstration in Moscow in support of Boris Yeltsin. Gorbachev moved 50,000 troops into Moscow to try and prevent the demonstration. But the miners opposed Gorbachev's ban. Even miners who are distrustful of Yeltsin opposed Gorbachev's attempt to crush the right to hold demonstrations.

Need for organization truly in the interest of the workers

The NPG may try to pin the strike to the coat-tails of Boris Yeltsin, who could use a successful settlement of the strike to score a victory over Gorbachev. But the miners have their own interests independent of the bourgeois politicians.

The miners are angry and fed up. They are right to cry out against Gorbachev. But they would be mistaken to tie themselves to Yeltsin's chariot. They have to learn from what has taken place in Poland where free-market capitalism has triumphed to the ruin of the working people. They have to work out their own program of struggle and an alternative vision of society truly in the interests of the working class. ■

Support the popular uprising in Iraq

Since the defeat of Saddam Hussein's army, rebellions against his regime have broken out across Iraq.

The rebellions are centered in northern Iraq in the region known as Iraqi Kurdistan, and in southern Iraq among the adherents of the Shiite sect of Islam. But there have also been demonstrations in central Iraq, even in Baghdad itself. In many places troops returning from the front lines of the Gulf war are bringing news of the disastrous end of Saddam's military adventure, and are joining the rebels.

In the rebellions various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties have come to the fore, with connections to Iraq's neighboring capitalist powers. These reflect the limited goals of the rebellion but they do not do away with the fact that the mass uprisings are popular insurrections. They reflect the struggle of masses of people to free themselves from Saddam's tyranny.

Progress of the revolt

The situation in Iraq is quite volatile, changing from day to day. And many of the reports coming out of the country are contradictory. But one thing is clear: serious, bitter fighting has developed in many parts of the country between forces trying to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and troops loyal to him.

In the north the Kurdish revolutionary movement has driven Saddam's army out of a large region and is battling for control of the major cities. Kurdistan's border with Turkey and Iran is reported to be completely in rebel hands. The Kurdish *peshmargas* (guerrilla fighters) have held the city of Sulaymaniyeh for weeks. On March 18 they captured the major oil center of Kirkuk, where the government's local militia joined them. Now they are battling for control of Mosul.

The Kurdish people have a history of valiant struggle for their rights against oppressive Iraqi regimes. Their last rebellion occurred in 1988, during the Iran-Iraq war. At that time Saddam put down their revolt with poison gas, killing 5,000 in the town of Halabja alone. This time too Saddam is using savage measures against the Kurds, including dropping napalm on them. Nonetheless the Kurds have defeated or won over many of the troops he has thrown at them.

The inspiration of the Kurdish revolt is spreading across the border into Turkey. The Turkish government is so afraid of rebellion among the Kurds in Turkey that for the first time it has met with some Kurdish leaders and agreed to consider their demands. The government has also, for the first time, allowed legal demonstrations of Kurds to take place. Tens of thousands of people have rallied in Turkish Kurdistan and in Turkey's major cities to support the revolt in Iraq. This is quite a concession from the Turkish government, which previously regarded it as a major crime for someone to call himself a Kurd.

In the south urban revolts are fighting Saddam's forces in Basra, Karbala, Najaf, and other cities. In the first days of the revolt it was reported that Hussein's local bureaucrats in Basra were killed by the rebels. Many army conscripts joined the revolt, and even some segments of the Republican Guard are reported to have turned against the regime.

The forces loyal to Saddam have wrought terrible destruction on rebel areas in the southern cities, especially Basra. The army demolished entire neighborhoods with tank fire, artillery, and helicopter gunships. Pro-Saddam troops dropped napalm on rebel positions and also, reportedly, used poison-gas grenades. Captured rebels are massacred in mass executions, their bodies left in the streets to intimidate the popula-



Kurdish rebels during lull in fighting in Kirkuk, Iraq

tion.

Despite the fierce repression, the rebellion continues. Tens of thousands of Iraqis who went into exile during the Iran-Iraq war have returned to join the fight against Saddam. They know that now, at the time of his defeat, they have an opportunity to overthrow the tyrant.

Saddam tries to appease the opposition

In mid-March Saddam, under pressure from the uprising, promised to abolish the one-party Baath Party dictatorship. He promised to establish political pluralism and announced that there would soon be a referendum for a new constitution. Shortly after that Saddam reorganized his government and appointed a Shiite to the post of prime minister (which he had previously held himself).

But Hussein still refused to accede to the demands of the rebels. And he kept Baath Party loyalists in the most important government posts. In particular, he maintained his nephew as Interior Minister — the same man who carried out the notorious gassing of the Kurds three years ago.

Not surprisingly, these flimsy moves did not satisfy the uprising's leaders. They continue to insist that Saddam must go, that there be free elections throughout the country, and that any new government recognize the national rights of the Kurds and deal with the grievances of the Shiites.

The widespread and determined nature of the rebellions shows that Saddam's Baath Party maintained power the last 20 years only through police-state terror and violence. As soon as his power was cut down, the Iraqi masses immediately rose in revolt. The Iraqi masses did not support Bush's war, but they used Saddam's defeat as their opportunity to press forward their struggle.

Bourgeois forces dominate the rebellion

We support the popular uprisings against Saddam's tyranny. At the same time we recognize that the leading political forces in these rebellions are not working class or even radical democratic trends.

The Kurdish rebels are united in a Kurdistan Front led by petty-bourgeois nationalist and bourgeois nationalist forces. The Shiite rebels of the south are united in an Islamic Front led by Shiite priests. The Shiite rebels receive a certain amount of aid and shelter from Iran and are subject to influence from Iran's theocratic regime. These two forces, along with the reformist "Communist"

Party of Iraq and a score of other parties, are united in a loose all-Iraq coalition based in Damascus. From there they are subject to pressure from the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Assad. (Assad's Baathist Party tyranny is similar to Saddam's, but due to conflicting regional ambitions they are deadly enemies.)

Besides Iran and Syria, other governments in the region such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey have been making various behind-the-scenes maneuvers with the rebel forces. They are all interested in replacing Saddam Hussein with some trend they can control, although none of them want to encourage revolutionary forces in the region. The same is true of the U.S., which occupies much of the country and continues to maintain economic sanctions, and can use that to pressure rebel forces.

Due to these pressures and due to

Bush is no friend of democracy in Iraq

On March 20, U.S. fighter planes shot down an Iraqi jet that was flying near Tikrit, Iraq. Immediately the media were abuzz with rumors about "re-engagement" of troops. Military leaders repeated their warnings to Iraq about not using chemical weapons and not using any aircraft, including helicopters. This talk made it sound like the Bush government is coming down on the side of the rebels in Iraq in their fight to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

That is not however what's going on.

Of course Bush has been working for months to rid the world of Saddam Hussein. He guided the war in the direction of ruining Hussein's regime and encouraging the Iraqi military to overthrow him. This remains Bush's goal. The U.S. government does want Saddam out, but they want it done in such a way that preserves the core of Saddam's regime — the military — as the guardian of law and order in Iraq.

Bush is willing to have the popular rebellion exert additional pressure on Saddam, but he is not eager to see the victory of the rebellion. The U.S. fears that this would create an unstable situation where things may not fall into place according to its interests. But of course, should the rebellion gain the upper hand, the U.S. government leaves the door open to deal with its leaders.

So far though, the U.S. refuses to give support to the rebels. Despite a short-lived threat against Iraqi use of helicop-

ters, and despite Hussein's continued use of helicopters to attack anti-Hussein rebels, American armed forces made no move to suppress the helicopter flights. The Western alliance is also placing various obstacles to food getting into rebel-held areas. By the end of March the Bush administration made plain their view to the media, that Hussein's victory over the rebels was inevitable, and they would accept that. Meanwhile they continue to hope for a military revolt against Saddam.

their own class nature, it would be no surprise to see the rebel leaders compromise with Saddam Hussein, or some successor to him from the Baath regime. But even if they win, the regime they establish will not mean liberation for the toiling masses of Iraq. It would be a bourgeois regime. And given the uneasy coalition of the different political forces, it is likely that the regime would become an arena of contention between the different forces and the outside powers who influence them. This could mean that the new regime may not fulfill the Kurdish people's demand for autonomy, since there are strong opponents to the Kurdish people being allowed their right of self-determination.

Nonetheless, if the power of the Baath regime is indeed broken to any real extent, it would represent a breakthrough for democratic rights and might open the door to the development of the class struggle, where working class political forces may begin to emerge and raise their voices.

The genie is out of the bottle

Repercussions from the Gulf war will continue to spread for years, and the wave of revolt in Iraq is only the first of these. The U.S. and its allies are trying to maintain the stability of the old ruling classes in the Gulf area. But by smashing Saddam Hussein they only created conditions for further instability. This instability is bound to give rise to many new developments.

If the rebels win, the regime they establish will not be a revolutionary one. The immediate beneficiaries would be the coalition of Islamic, reformist, and bourgeois nationalist forces. But smashing the Baath Party tyranny will inspire the masses with confidence and open up an era in which the working class can more openly fight for its rights. For this reason, it is important to support the popular rebellions despite their leaderships of today.

■

Imperialism cherishes stability

The overall aim of Bush and the imperialists in the Persian Gulf area is to maintain the status quo, which means their control over oil resources. Bush turned against Hussein when he thought that Hussein was threatening that stability. But Bush sees the popular insurrection against Hussein as another, perhaps even more dangerous, destabilizing force.

The president of Turkey was a close ally of Bush during the war. And in a visit to Washington the last week of March, he declared that Iraq's "territorial integrity" was the most important thing. In other words, it's fine with him if Hussein continues his tyranny in Baghdad; the main danger is instability and the threatened breakup of Iraq. The Turkish government is extremely worried

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Anger against the war will not die

With the easy victory in the ground offensive, the half-hearted opposition to the Persian Gulf war by some liberal politicians collapsed. Jesse Jackson, for example, wrote an "open letter" to President Bush, telling him he had "the support of a grateful people" and praising the war effort as "the passion for a new world." (*Los Angeles Times*, March 16)

But there were others who weren't grateful to Bush for slaughtering tens of thousands of Iraqis. They supported the GI resistance, rather than being military morale boosters. In March the demonstrations against the war dropped dramatically in size and frequency, as might be expected. Nevertheless, right in the face of the flag-waving and the gloating about "high-tech" war, demonstrations continued. The anger against the U.S. massacre of Iraqis is not going to go away.

Meanwhile every day brings another account of atrocity in Iraq and Kuwait. The emir of Kuwait, on whose behalf this war was fought, is organizing death squads against Palestinians and expelling

hundreds of thousands of common people from Kuwait. Bush, who called Saddam Hussein a Hitler, is winking at the suppression of the popular revolts against this Hitler. Each day brings more news of the cynical imperialist nature of the Persian Gulf war.

Below we list some of the protests around the country in March.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, 300 people rallied outside the Concord Naval Base on March 16, which is a major installation for the shipping of war supplies. As well, 3,500 gathered for a teach-in at the Berkeley campus of the University of California.

500 people attended a rally in Chicago on March 10 organized by Palestinian activists. As well, 450 attended a student conference at Loyola which discussed the anti-war movement. And 300 people attended a meeting to denounce the TV and newspapers as "stenographers" for the rich.

In Boston, the Marxist-Leninist Party organized a march from Harvard Square

on March 2. At the starting point, a crowd of up to 100 gathered to hear speeches. Then the march proceeded down Massachusetts Avenue.

Hundreds attended an in-door rally in New York City in March. As well, throughout the month, militant high school students continued to organize. "Students Against War" has launched a

campaign aimed at military recruitment in the schools. In early March they held a protest at the recruiting center on 66th Street, which is opposite two high schools, and they beat buckets and distributed an anti-war leaflet. Later in the month some of these high school activists joined a protest of 100 in support of people arrested in earlier actions. ■



March 16 anti-war march at Concord Naval Weapons Station, California



New York City students demonstrate against the Persian Gulf War, Feb. 21

Atrocities in 'liberated' Kuwait

George Bush has restored the emir of Kuwait to his throne. And the emir in turn is desperately trying to prop up his tyrannical system of rule. The emir's men are shutting down newspapers that question absolute monarchy. Death squads are out hunting down liberal dissidents. Palestinians are being tortured, killed and hounded out of the country.

Bush's "liberation" of Kuwait has meant the liberation of the billionaire sheiks, a return to exploitation-as-usual, only with more repression. But already, the sands are shifting under the feet of the royal family.

Death squads, not democracy

There has been a lot of speculation in the American press about the possibility that the emir will establish elections or some kind of constitutional monarchy. And there is an internal opposition that calls for such reforms. It is more-or-less united in a National Constitutional Front that includes former politicians, wealthy merchants, and Islamic fundamentalist politicians. This is a Chamber of Commerce-type opposition led by the bourgeois who are not part of the royal family; some of them are extremely wealthy and yet are shut out of the corridors of political power. Prior to 1986 the emir allowed them a talkshop parliament, but when they questioned some of his policies he closed it down.

Eventually these bourgeois may succeed in getting the emir to broaden his regime. Why there is even talk of giving some women the right to vote. But for now there is no democracy in Kuwait.

The country is under martial law, ruled by the emir's personal army backed up by U.S. troops. And the royal family is not about to easily make concessions to anyone. It has already come out that the emir's family is unleashing a reign of terror through a network of death squads. One bourgeois dissident, a former parliamentarian who called for a constitution, was recently shot in his home. The head of the Gulf Bank of Kuwait charged that the royal family has recruited hundreds of hit men to suppress the opposition.

Unity against the Palestinians

Even if the bourgeois opposition succeeds in striking a deal for greater power in the regime, the government will remain a reactionary power — aimed against the majority. That's because Kuwaiti citizens are a minority in this land — the majority are Palestinians and other foreign laborers.

Despite their differences, the emir and his opposition are united against the Palestinians. Before the Iraqi invasion, Palestinians occupied an important place among the working people of Kuwait. Many Palestinian families have lived in Kuwait for generations, and many low-level administrative and teaching positions were occupied by Palestinians. Yet they were not allowed to become citizens, to have trade unions or political organizations.

Now the Palestinians have been targeted for revenge by the "Kuwaiti resistance," which is a mixed bag. Some did fight the Iraqi occupation, while others

declared themselves fighters when the Iraqis retreated. With the U.S. and Saudi forces backing them up, the "resistance fighters" have gone on a rampage against the Palestinians. Young men especially are targeted, seized at checkpoints and even from their homes. Many have been summarily expelled from the country, thousands are being held in jails and tortured, while scores are known to have been executed.

Palestinian families are fingered as "collaborators" if they just tried to maintain a normal lifestyle under the Iraqi occupation and kept sending their children to school. The Palestinians are scapegoated even for the fact that they were often the merchants who kept Kuwaitis alive during the occupation, by buying food in Iraq and transporting it to Kuwait.

These atrocities are carried out with the knowledge and cooperation of U.S. troops in Kuwait. Such is the wonderful "liberation" brought by America to the Mideast!

The emir fiddles while the masses suffer

Meanwhile the emir is having a palace refurbished to house him and his harem. Construction workers were rushed into Kuwait City to fix up the emir's quarters with gold faucets and toilets. At the same time the rest of the population is without electricity, and short of water and food. Many Kuwaitis who remained inside the country under the Iraqi occupation say that conditions are worse now than they were under the Iraqis. With conditions

like these for the wealthy and middle class Kuwaitis, one can imagine what life is like for the poor foreign workers.

Imperialism equals reaction

Bush tries to divert us from the domestic economic crisis by glorifying his foreign "victory" (actually, slaughter). But the U.S. imperialists' policy in the Middle East is the same as their policy here — to keep the working class in line, to maintain exploitation-as-usual. Different capitalist powers may squabble over who gets what sphere of influence, but they all agree on the need for oppression and exploitation. The U.S. imperialists, who installed the Shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua, who helped maintain Marcos in the Philippines, Pinochet in Chile, and apartheid in South Africa — these arch reactionaries are not about to liberate the masses in any country. They will continue reactionary aggression, war for the sake of capitalist greed, until they are overthrown.

Everything about the "new Kuwait" shows that the anti-war movement was absolutely right to oppose Bush's war. Bush's victory did not bring liberation to the poor, the oppressed, and the workers of Kuwait. They have simply traded one capitalist taskmaster for another. But some of the results achieved by this war may go beyond what Bush was hoping for. The emir may be back on the throne, but his regime is in deep crisis. ■

Lessons from the anti-war movement

MILITANCY OR NO?

The Persian Gulf brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets in protest. The protesters didn't simply want to sit on chairs while the bigwigs pontificated about sanctions versus bombing, petitioning Congress versus praying to the UN. Instead they put their own stamp on the movement. In San Francisco activists blockaded the Federal Building for days on end and stopped traffic on the bridges. In New York City, students marched out of the high schools and swarmed with others into the streets. In Chicago marchers repeatedly took over the streets despite police bullying. In a number of places protesters defied the police or school authorities or confronted the flag-waving counterdemonstrators, and thousands of people braved arrest as well. And they often shouted slogans for the U.S. to simply get out of the Persian Gulf.

But not everyone in the movement was happy about this defiant spirit. "Respectable" leaders of coalitions, pro-establishment figures, and reformist groups who measure success by the number of politicians or union officials on the podium, are declaring that militancy was the scourge of the movement. While anti-war activists ponder the next step forward, these reformists tell them to give up their rebelliousness. They call all these actions "civil disobedience." They declare that it is "sectarian" and "turns off the masses" and counterpose it to building a broad base. They shrug off police repression and instead denounce militant protest as "violence."

Does militant protest alienate the masses?

The experience of the movement was that militant activities not only didn't repel the new forces, but they attracted people looking for a way to oppose the war. There was no way that hundreds of thousands of people were going to simply sit still to listen to liberal sermons from politicians and officials. At one level or another, activists looked for ways to express their outrage. Take, for example, the thousands of new activists among the high school youth in New York City. Many of them were quite rightly fed up with the stodgy speeches at boring events planned by the official leaders of the movement. They swarmed through the streets as a way to confront the system.

And in only a few weeks after the bombing had begun, the movement had embraced well over a million participants.

The level of struggle varied at different actions and among different sections of protesters. But there was overall a strong tendency for people to want to express their anger through confronting the warmongers in one way or another. The official organizers of events, with their tame idea of what a movement should be, had to expend a good deal of effort in restraining the demonstrators. Don't shout slogans, don't confront reactionaries, don't break the rules — they issued a thousand "don'ts" on their little cards of rules. Instead, true leaders of the movement should have been helping the activists to learn new ways to confront the imperialists and warmongers, helping those who had been silent to have a voice, helping those who had never seen a march to spread all over the cities.

The "day after" demonstration in Chicago

A case in point is the demonstration of February 25 in Chicago, which was called to protest the start of the ground war. But the reformist leaders of the Emergency Coalition for Peace in the

Middle East decided to call off the march and only hold a rally; after all, marches in Chicago kept turning into street takeovers and confrontations. They fretted that they could not keep a march under control and that any confrontation with the police would offend the "middle class liberals."

Many activists were outraged at this high-handed edict, and they held a spirited march anyway. To do so, they had to defy the marshals from the Emergency Coalition who sought to physically restrain them.

Why did the leaders of the Emergency Coalition go to such lengths against the activists? They were sacrificing the interests of the movement to the electoral ambition of such liberal Democrats as mayoral candidate Danny Davis. They were afraid that a publicized confrontation would hurt his vote count in the imminent primary election. It didn't matter to the Coalition honchos that Davis, like the Democrats in general, did not really oppose the war. Even when the Coalition had him as a speaker at an early rally, he did not condemn U.S. bullying in the Gulf but simply called for a "speedy resolution" of the war.

In whose interests?

So the real question is not that militancy turns off the masses. The real question is what type of movement are we trying to build, and who are we trying to attract? To attract the masses and confront the imperialists, we need a militant movement. But to take part in bourgeois politicking and seek the support of establishment figures, to attract the "middle class" and search for a niche in the media, the movement has to be kept tame and restrained.

The reformist leaders who look to the establishment have shouted about "vio-

lence" in the movement. For example, the Chicago Emergency Coalition leaders condemned those who tried to march in the streets on February 25 as violators of the principles of non-violence. It turns out that the reformists regard any defiance of the authorities as "violence."

But to get rid of imperialist war we need to get rid of the imperialist system that breeds war. If the movement is to take a loyalty oath to the ruling class, and pledge to never break its rules, then everyone might as well go home and hope that the warmongers simply have a change of heart.

Extending the movement

All this does not mean that there aren't real problems in extending the movement among the workers and poor.

It is necessary to take the anti-war agitation into the working class and minority neighborhoods, the factories, and the schools. It is notable that when there were protests in working class and minority areas, they were well received. Generally, however, this wasn't done very much.

But who will bring the anti-war agitation to the working class communities? It won't be done by the opponents of militancy. They identify the workers with the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom, and the oppressed minorities with the respectable pro-establishment leaders. Only with the militant spirit of defiance against such leaders can there be any real link with the masses. It doesn't matter what demands the movement takes up — unless it develops the struggle among the masses and fights illusions in the establishment leaders, there will be no lasting links with the working masses.

Not for its own sake

True, militancy alone is not the answer

against this is subdued.

Grooming a lapdog

The U.S. position is summed up by an administration official who recently said, "It's easier to deal with a tame Saddam than with an unknown quantity." (*Village Voice*, March 19, p. 8) Bush would like a change of government leaders, but he would like a change to a "known quantity."

To this end Bush and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia have been trying to groom a set of new leaders for Iraq. Bush and the Saudis have brought a few ex-confidantes of Saddam Hussein into Riyadh. Their favorite "known quantity" is Ibrahim Daud, a former general in the Iraqi army and torturer of the masses, known affectionately as "Saddam II."

This is Bush's preferred solution: to get rid of Hussein in an army revolt that brings a pro-Western military strongman to power. This is the pattern established by numerous dictatorships in Latin America. Until this happens, Bush plans to keep the pressure on Hussein with UN economic sanctions, embargoes, demands for disarmament and reparations, occupation of southern Iraq, etc. The goal is to make Hussein's regime crack, or — if Hussein remains in power — to keep him cut down to size and under control.

Playing the field

While preferring the strongman, Bush is also willing to play around a bit with the rebels. There have been contacts between U.S. politicians and Kurdish rebel leaders who are hanging around Washington seeking talks with the State Department. And there are reports that

to all problems of the movement. There has to be consideration of what the movement is lacking, of how to strengthen its political basis, and how to really draw in the toilers. But we hail the militancy of the movement because it paves the way for building a mass struggle that will really confront the rotten capitalist system.

Militant actions are to accomplish an aim. In Chicago, for example, the street takeovers have been an important part of the struggle. But it by no means follows that every action must take over the streets, even if the conditions aren't favorable. Similarly, in some places there has occasionally been some random "trashing" that is pointless, and some groups give an exaggerated significance to individual antics.

For a movement that confronts the imperialists!

But it is one thing to consider the best tactics for confronting the imperialists, and another to worry about offending the establishment. Is it possible to build a serious movement against mass murderers like Bush, Powell, and Schwarzkopf if one is worried about offending the powers-that-be? Any movement which hopes to make a difference must not be cowed down by the bourgeois authorities.

We need to find ways to build a movement that is spirited and angry, a movement that is not bound by timid legalism, a movement that is defiant. The movement must not recoil before militancy, but the militants must see that it is no accident that reformist leaders are recoiling from struggle. It is a question of what type of movement we are building, of whether we want to base the movement on the exploited majority or on the liberal second thoughts of the bourgeoisie.

the U.S. may be providing some surreptitious aid to the rebels. This is just to cover all bases, to ensure that the U.S. has the power of bribes (and withholding of bribes) ready to use among any serious contenders for power.

Bush's arguments for the Gulf war were lies from beginning to end. Bush's biggest lie was the argument that since Hussein was a tyrant therefore this justified an imperialist onslaught against Iraq. True, Hussein is a tyrant. But Bush is totally hypocritical about this. If Bush were so much against tyrants, why is he propping up the fascists in El Salvador? The way Bush waged the war showed his hypocrisy also. If Bush wanted to "save" the Arab people from Hussein, carpet-bombing them was no way to do it. Tens of thousands of ordinary workers, women and children were killed by Bush's aggression.

Now the war's aftermath shows Bush's imperialist hypocrisy once again. The U.S. pretends to stand for democracy and human rights in the Mideast. But on the ground, in the real world, they bring martial law to part of Iraq, while playing off Saddam and the rebels. And the only solution they offer, the only hope they hold out, is to bring in Saddam II.

The U.S. occupation of Iraq just prolongs the agony of the working people of Iraq. Bush's troops have no liberating role to play there any more than they did in Kuwait. Workers and anti-war activists should keep up the demand: U.S. imperialism, get out of the Middle East!



The World in Struggle

Germany: the unification bubble bursts

Tens of thousands of workers took to the streets of eastern Germany in March to protest rising unemployment. At the same time, workers in western Germany were demanding higher wages. The combined effect of these demands is throwing the administration of Chancellor Helmut Kohl into crisis.

Last year Kohl was riding high as he engineered the unification of East and West Germany. Kohl promised the workers of East Germany access to a better life, with secure employment and higher standards of living. In December Kohl completed unification by winning national elections. But since then hundreds of enterprises in eastern Germany have gone belly up, and the workers are left without a livelihood.

Thousands march in Leipzig

On March 18 about 100,000 people gathered in eastern German cities to protest rising unemployment. Some 70,000 gathered in Leipzig, where massive demonstrations were crucial in bringing down the East German state-capitalist regime in the fall of 1989. This was the third huge protest in Leipzig in a week. Demonstrators carried signs calling Chancellor Kohl "pig" and "liar," and they chanted "Kohl must go!"

Only months ago Kohl was celebrating his re-election and riding high. But now the economy in eastern Germany has collapsed. Nearly one-third of the work force is unemployed or only working part time. And this is due to increase dramatically on July 1, when enterprises in eastern Germany will no longer be required to "carry" extra employees; after that, they can lay off all their workers, shut down and declare bankruptcy.

No relief is coming from the Kohl government either. Kohl recently passed a law allowing rents in eastern Germany to rise by 200-300%.

Angry workers throughout Germany

Meanwhile, in western Germany, public sector workers are demanding higher wages. Transit workers paralyzed rush-hour traffic with short strikes in dozens of cities in mid-March. There were also short warning strikes by postal workers, telephone workers, railway employees, and public works, sanitation and hospital workers. And metal workers in the giant IG Metall union are still

threatening a strike for higher wages.

Kohl used to tell workers not to worry, that Germany had plenty of money to pay for unification. But with the economic collapse in eastern Germany, Kohl is hard pressed for cash. Germany is affected by the same recession currently plaguing the U.S., and there is a credit shortage. To pay for his programs Kohl turns to the working class, and demands that they accept wage stagnation. At the same time he is raising taxes.

Kohl is also under criticism from major sections of the bourgeoisie. They are afraid that the spirit of revolt which seized the workers in eastern Germany may now spread to western Germany. There is speculation that he may be forced to broaden his administration to include some Social-Democrats. But the workers cannot be satisfied with the reshuffling of cabinet posts.

Anger at right-wing stands

Kohl is also faced with rising anger at his reactionary stands on other issues. For one thing, there is his support for Bush's war in the Persian Gulf. Anti-war sentiment is so strong in Germany that Kohl was not able to send troops and ships to the Gulf. But he did support Bush's war with a contribution of some \$7 billion. There's bitter anger in the country that, at a time of economic hardship, Kohl is spending money to pay for imperialist slaughter.

There have also been protests against Germany's reactionary laws against abortion. Abortions are still legal in eastern Germany, but due to unification the laws there will soon be required to change, to conform with Germany's harsh anti-abortion laws.

Recently a woman who formerly lived in East Germany, and who had moved to West Germany, went abroad for an abortion. On returning she was stopped at the frontier and subjected to a vaginal search, and then arrested for having had an abortion, even though it took place in a foreign country. This atrocity sparked a number of protests throughout Germany. It is another gross example of the East Germans' search for freedom being horrendously twisted by the reactionary West German leaders. The working masses cannot trust the promises of lying capitalist politicians like Kohl; they must take to the streets and fight for their own interests. ■

Gdansk shipyard workers defy Lech Walesa

In mid-March a strike broke out among workers at the famous Gdansk shipyard where the Solidarity union began. But this strike was not sanctioned by Solidarity. On the contrary — Solidarity's president is now the president of Poland, and the workers were striking against his policies.

The strike came after a number of protests had been held in Poland against Walesa's plan to tax "excess wages." Part of Walesa's plan for rapid conversion to a private-market economy is to keep wages down. Everything is to sell for whatever it can fetch; everything that is, except labor, which will not be allowed

to fetch high wages even if employers are willing to pay them. Any employer who dares to give his workers raises beyond the strict government guidelines will be levied an "excess wages tax."

After a year and a half of Solidarity's "shock therapy" to private capitalism, the workers are beginning to get restive. Former President Mazowiecki, and now Walesa, continue to promise that if workers are patient, everyone will get rich in the end. And for Walesa, of course, everything has worked out. He lives in a palace, and he travels to the U.S. to hobnob with the big-time Western capitalists.

But for the mass of workers, most things are worse. Unemployment has risen to over a million workers. Real incomes (the buying power of wages) have dropped by 30%. Small farmers have also been hard hit by the ending of government subsidies for food production; many have been forced into bankruptcy. Overall, production has fallen 28%.

The Social Democratic Party, the leftovers of the old revisionist "communist" party which ruled Poland for four decades, is trying to use the present

catastrophe to make a comeback. But for the workers there can be no going back to stagnant, repressive state-capitalism, any more than they can rest satisfied with the harsh exploitation of Walesa-style private capitalism. Workers must work to build up a new revolutionary trend that stands for genuine workers' communism, that fights for the workers' interests under the present regime and at the same time works to replace it with a socialist system based on the workers themselves. ■

Words of wisdom from Walesa

Lech Walesa, president of Poland, toured the United States the last week of March. Walesa was wined and dined by the Polish-American businessmen in Chicago. He swore he would build a capitalist economy in Poland even better than the one in the U.S. And then Walesa tried to hit them up for loans and investments. But though the capitalists love Lech, they're cautious about putting their money where their mouth is.

At the end of his trip Walesa visited the Statue of Liberty in New York. There he made a statement on the nature of freedom:

"I did not think she would be that big. But if she is that big, then the liberty

[in the U.S.] must be great. We will have to increase the size of our monuments in Poland so we can increase our liberty." (*Detroit Free Press*, March 27)

This is the profound statement on freedom by the "great genius," the Nobel Peace Prize winner himself. Actually, it reveals a lot about Walesa's plans for his presidency. The workers can be driven into poverty, women's rights can be decimated, religious bigotry can be forced onto school children — none of that matters. All that matters is that you have some very large monuments to glorify your reign. How about a 200-foot-high statue of Lech kissing the pope's ring while shining the shoes of Bush? ■

Soviet miners strike amidst the fiasco of perestroika

The Soviet coal strike that began on March 4 continues to spread. Some 300,000 miners have participated in the strike so far. They continue to press their demand for a large raise in pay. And they have also come out with the call "Gorbachev, resign!"

Progress of the strike

It began as a one-day warning strike on March 4 in the Kuznetsk coal mining region in central Siberia. But the miners decided to extend the strike, and it quickly spread. Strikers set up local committees to run the strike and a coordinating committee in Moscow.

In the Kuznetsk Basin, about two-thirds of the region's mines have been shut down or stopped delivering coal. Some of the mines still operating are doing so under the control of local strike committees; they are digging only enough coal to provide heat for local towns and to keep local metal plants operating at a minimal level.

In the Ukraine's Donetsk Basin, the country's largest coal-producing region, some 55 of 249 mines have been shut down.

In the Arctic region of Vorkuta, almost all of the area's 13 mines have shut down. The strike also shut mines in western Siberia and the Urals.

In all, about one-half of the country's mines have been affected, and coal deliveries have been cut by a good one-third. This is a serious blow to the Soviet economy, which heavily relies on coal. Steel production is dwindling, and machine-building plants are faced with closure. And authorities are faced with the prospect of strikes breaking out in these industries also.

Government tries to stonewall miners' demands

In the beginning, the government simply ignored the strike. Then, as it spread, the government issued threats.

The strikes were illegal, a clear violation of the law passed after the 1989 strike which forbids strikes in the important energy sector. The government threatened firings and fines.

Nonetheless the strike spread. Gorbachev then suggested that he would be willing to negotiate. But by this time the miners had taken up the demand "Gorbachev, resign!" Recently the government has tried to rouse public opinion against the miners with a scare campaign about how the miners are trying to grab scarce resources for themselves at a time of shortage.

An old, worn pretense

Gorbachev still maintains some "socialist" rhetoric in order to mobilize public opinion against the miners. But this kind of talk is wearing thin indeed. What kind of "socialism" is it that threatens the organized mass action of the workers of a major industry? What kind of "socialism" is it that bans strikes and demonstrations by workers? What kind of "socialism" is it that continually drives down the living standards of the workers, while a rich stratum of bureaucrats continues to live well?

This is not socialism at all, but state-capitalism. Socialism is the rule of the workers. It means the continuous improvement of living standards in a planned economy. It means the flowering of workers' participation in social and political affairs, not their suppression. It means working towards equalization of pay and opportunities in society as the transition to full communism is made — not the splitting of society into haves and have-nots, the bureaucrats with connections and the workers who simply produce.

State-capitalism has reached a dead end in the Soviet Union. The economy stagnated during the Brezhnev years.

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