



No blood for oil!

Bush rushes towards war



New York protesters jam the streets in anti-war march, Oct. 20

trying to set up between Washington and Baghdad have no other expressed purpose than simply delivering this ultimatum. There may be feelers for a deal, but it is to be done with a gun at each other's head. These meetings, coming after the additional troop buildup in November, amount to the diplomatic side of the military escalation against Iraq.

What sort of war?

A war of great brutality has been prepared. Nearly a million troops are being amassed on both sides. Several months ago, U.S. Air Force General Dugan bragged about Pentagon plans to bomb the city of Baghdad, which would cause huge civilian casualties. The Iraqi regime has not hidden its threat to use chemical weapons. Even a brief war would cause several thousand casualties. The Pentagon is reported to have shipped 45,000 body bags to the Gulf region.

What would all this bloodletting of youth from Iraq and the U.S. be for? Forget the nonsense from the U.S. about "fighting naked aggression" or upholding

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'Peace dividend' goes up in smoke

Remember the "peace dividend"?

The end of the cold war was supposed to mean less military spending and finally some money to pay for schools, child care, drug rehabilitation, etc.

But it turns out that the ruling class has no interest in social programs. Cold war or not, it can always find more use for military spending.

Now there is the war buildup in the Persian Gulf. This is already inspiring a new round of military spending.

Furthermore, Congress has already ruled out a "peace dividend" for at least the next three years. The recent budget deal specifies that social programs are to be cut in the name of deficit-reduction, and that military spending may not be transferred to social programs. Under no circumstances. It doesn't matter that rising unemployment and poverty are expected with the recession. Let the poor eat the Gramm-Rudman bill, that's the new Congressional gospel.

A budget deal to preserve military spending

The budget deal divides the budget into three big categories — domestic, military, and foreign aid. Each of these categories has its own, separate spending limit, which the budget deal specifies for the next three years. Each category has to balance its own spending separately from the others. (*New York Times*, October 30)

For example, if defense spending goes down, this doesn't affect any other part of the budget. Such a "peace dividend" can only go to reduce the deficit. It is expected that, in practice, this will blunt any inclination to cut defense spending.

Or suppose that rising unemployment

and homelessness forces an increase in social spending that violates the spending cap. Then the Gramm-Rudman automatic spending cuts go into effect. But, under the budget deal, they are made only in the budget category in which they occur, in this case, "domestic." Thus no matter how much suffering rises, social spending cannot rise. It can only be taken from one program and given to the other.

Before the budget deal, any Gramm-Rudman spending cuts would have been across the board, covering all programs except entitlements. The military would have had to bear much of the burden of any automatic spending cuts. But no more. As soon as it appeared that Gramm-Rudman spending cuts were a possibility, Congress ran to exempt the military.

Militarism and capitalism go hand in hand

The capitalists love military spending because they want to dominate the world. American capitalism is seeing many rivals gaining on it economically, and it reigns supreme only in its huge military machine. The care and tending of this military monster for mass slaughter has been one of the main reasons for the huge growth of the federal deficit in the 80's.

And the capitalists love military spending because where else can they sell a screwdriver for \$500?

The only way to get a peace dividend is to drive out the capitalist parties of militarism and financial swindling. Down with the Democrats and Republicans, who have stolen the "peace dividend." Build an independent political movement of the working class!

At the end of November, George Bush took yet another giant step towards a bloody, destructive war in the Persian Gulf. He got the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution authorizing a war against Iraq if Saddam Hussein refuses to leave Kuwait by January 15.

The next day, Bush launched his "diplomatic surprise." He offered to meet the Iraqi foreign minister, and Secretary of State Baker's being readied to go meet Saddam Hussein. The press and politicians — Republicans and Democrats alike — all hailed this as a masterful, last-minute effort to seek peace.

Nonsense. Bush's moves amount to an ultimatum demanding an unconditional Iraqi surrender. The meetings Bush is

More articles on Gulf crisis, pages 4-6 and 13

Bangladesh: The people defy emergency rule

The people of Bangladesh are in the streets again to oust the dictatorship of General Ershad, who has been in power since a 1982 coup. In a desperate attempt to contain the movement against him, Ershad declared a state of emergency on November 27. This brought curfews, new bans on democratic rights, and additional press censorship. But this fall's movement has become so strong that the working people and youth are in no mood to cool out.

Students massed in the streets shouting "We don't accept the emergency!" and "Down with Ershad!" The curfew has been repeatedly violated by throngs of demonstrators around Dhaka, the capital. Police opened fire on protesters, and dozens of people are reported to have been killed.

One general strike has already taken place to protest the emergency, and opposition forces have called for an indefinite general strike beginning Tuesday, December 4.

Momentum builds against the tyranny

Throughout Ershad's nine-year reign, the people of Bangladesh have mounted several powerful challenges to remove him. But the past struggles failed in the face of army repression and the government's political maneuvers with the

bourgeois opposition parties.

This year has again seen the outcry against Ershad's regime mount. At the end of July, for example, there were protests against a new "national health policy." Among other things, this program would introduce new fees for hospital care, which would be a huge burden on the masses in this poverty-stricken country.

The mass movement took off in earnest on October 10. The students at Dhaka University and other campuses launched a campaign to demand the end of Ershad's rule. The police fired on student demonstrators, killing and injuring students, workers, and bystanders. Ershad closed Dhaka University and another one in a desperate attempt to forestall further student protests.

The fight was now on!

The weeks since have seen many marches and demonstrations, attempts to gherao (surround) government installations and barricade roadways, and several hartals (general strikes). On November 19, towns and cities throughout the country resounded with the cry "Ershad must go!"

Workers have also gone into action. The Workers and Employees Unity Council, made up of opposition labor unions, has revived its campaign for its

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4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

Fall 1990 (See pages 7-10)



Strikes and workplace news

New York 'Daily News' strike enjoys wide support

Over 13,000 chanting strikers and their supporters filled the street in front of the *New York Daily News* building on November 1. The *Daily News* workers began striking October 31, and since then there have been several other rallies involving thousands of people supporting the strike.

The *Daily News* is now owned by the Tribune Company, which several years ago smashed the unions at the *Chicago Tribune*. It is demanding massive concessions from the workers, who have been without a contract since March 31. While it pleads poverty, the *Daily News* has spent millions of dollars over the last eight months training scabs to break a strike. Scabs are now writing articles, running the presses, and driving the delivery trucks.

But very few copies of the *Daily News* can be found in the streets of New York City. Even though the *Daily News* is the second largest metropolitan daily newspaper in the United States, only 20% of its pre-strike circulation of 1.1 million daily papers are being distributed. Strikers have picketed, blocked scab delivery trucks, and pressured over 25,000 newsstand dealers and stores to not carry the

News. It is also reported that, as of November 5, only 40 of 750 major advertisers remained with the paper.

The *Daily News* is so desperate to distribute its scab paper that they have hired hundreds of people, many recruited from homeless shelters, to hawk the papers in the streets. The paper attempted to distribute 50,000 copies of the November 5 edition free of charge. It was reported that many people could be seen at subway entrances that day refusing the free copies.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the nine striking unions are weakening the struggle. The union bureaucrats have called for the paper to be sold to a better boss. This is similar to the losing strategy of the union hacks to oust Lorenzo in the Eastern Airlines struggle. As well, they are diverting the workers away from militant tactics, such as organizing mass picketing to stop the scabs, and are narrowing the tactics down to a boycott of the paper. This was the tactic followed in the *Chicago Tribune* strike which led to its defeat. But so far the strike remains firm and enjoys enormous support from the working people of New York.

New York City workers rally against layoffs

Nearly 10,000 people filled City Hall Park November 7 to protest New York Mayor Dinkins' threat to lay off thousands of workers. Strikers from the *Daily News*, Greyhound and Eastern Airlines showed up in solidarity with the rally of secretaries, clerks, sanitation workers, transportation workers, nurses and other city employees. The next day, several thousand more workers joined a lunch time protest.

Mayor Dinkins has announced he is cutting 5,500 city jobs now and as many as 20,000 next year. His plan includes scaling back school programs, delaying garbage recycling, and slashing all city services except police, corrections and district attorneys. The Dinkins government is facing a \$1.6 billion budget deficit in the next fiscal year. Part of the budget crunch comes from stepped up hiring of police. While services for the

masses are slashed, and impoverishment and homelessness mushroom, Dinkins is continuing his program to make the biggest city police force in the world even bigger. Police terror against the masses, that's the program of the liberal Democrat who claimed to be labor's friend.

Last year, the union leaders of AFSCME, Teamsters and the Transit Workers were in the forefront of the election campaign for Dinkins. Now, Dinkins is spitting in their faces. While announcing huge layoffs, he has also declared he won't give them decent raises. Contract talks for most city workers broke off at the first of November. But still the union bureaucrats hold out hopes that their friend Dinkins will come through. Forget it. The workers must prepare for mass struggle if they are to defend themselves.

New York transit worker protest

The 1991 pick for jobs has been postponed indefinitely in the New York Transit Authority's track department. The Transit bosses had clearly been set on using the job-pick to once again force through job cuts, job combinations, and unsafe changes in tours and other working conditions. But confronted with mass resistance, the bosses are having to alter their plans.

Through the summer track workers carried out a petition campaign against pick givebacks and in defense of provisional workers who were being fired. On August 27, about 60 track workers picketed Transit headquarters, despite a

boycott of the demonstration and sabotage by the bureaucrats of the Transit Workers Union (TWU). This independent action forced even the TWU officials to call some rallies. On October 5, hundreds of transit workers rallied in front of the transit headquarters in midtown Manhattan. The rally covered an entire city block. It was marked with handmade placards declaring "Defend the provisionals" and "Kiley [transit head], Go Back to the CIA" and "Down with the takeback offensive with the pick."

(Based in part on the November 14 "New York Workers' Voice," paper of the MLP-New York.)



New York Daily News strikers rock scab bus in Brooklyn

Strikers and anti-war protesters unite

As many as 2,000 workers protested at the Port Authority Terminal in New York City November 16. Carrying homemade signs like "Down with the scabs," strikers from Greyhound and the *New York Daily News* were joined by anti-war protesters. A big cheer went up when a speaker from an anti-war coalition declared, "After nine long months on strike, there's no doubt there's war. But the war is here! Against the greedy corporations, not against other workers in the Middle East!"

Meanwhile, in San Francisco nearly 1,000 people marched from the Chevron

Oil building — where they denounced the war buildup — to the East Bay Terminal — where they supported the strike of Greyhound workers. Repeatedly the marchers took the street. Despite about 10 arrests, the police were unable to control them.

Unfortunately, the union leaders are not as militant as the masses. Instead of advocating mass picketing, which is essential to shut down Greyhound and the *New York Daily News* and win those strikes, the union hacks have narrowed the fight down to a passive boycott of Greyhound and the *News*.

Hispanic garment workers fight abuse

In El Paso, Texas — one of the largest garment-producing cities in the country — it is increasingly common for contractors to close shops without paying the workers and then reopen under another name. As well, sometimes shops that stay open refuse to pay their employees for months at a time.

In a recent study, the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that 18 El Paso garment industry employers owed 337 employees over \$87,330 in back pay. Although such outrages take place nationwide, they are particularly prevalent in the El Paso area.

Many of the immigrant workers fear their employers will sabotage their applications for legal residency if they complain. Others keep quiet and keep working, hoping they will be paid if they do

not make waves.

But recently garment workers have begun to fight back. A group called La Mujer Obrera (Spanish for "the working women"), made up largely of factory workers, has been tracking garment factories and owners since May. They have picketed several factories and provided legal assistance to employees who are owed money.

This month, employees at one factory held a daylong work stoppage which ended only after La Mujer Obrera negotiated a loan from a local religious group to pay wages owed to the workers. They also obtained an agreement signed by the factory owner that they would be allowed to sell his property and keep the proceeds if future wages are not paid.

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The 1990 Postal Contract Negotiations

Remember that November issue of the Postmaster General's *Frank Talk*? The one where Anthony Frank gloated that volume was up, employment was down, productivity was the best in 19 years, and the Postal Service was on the

path of better employee relations? What a farce!

Why, at the very same time, Frank was rewarding his "valued career employees" with demands for the most outrageous set of contract concessions to come

down the rails in years.

Obviously the workers have to fight these demands. But the union leaders — instead of mobilizing the rank and file for mass action — have continued the old contract and once again put the new proposals through the tedious process of fact-finding and binding arbitration that could easily drag on through April. Instead of the workers having their say on the contract, everything is left in the hands of federal mediators and the same

arbitration service that banned strikes by postal workers in the first place.

The workers can't leave their fate in the hands of wealthy arbitrators. It's time for the rank and file to get moving on their own. Denounce the takeback demands of the Postal Service! Pass out protest leaflets throughout the postal facilities! Build up a network of militants who can mobilize the rank and file for action!

Down with the outrageous demands of the Postal Service!

Just look at some of the postal management's demands:

No wage increase in the two-year contract. Instead, management offered lump-sum bonuses which do not get rolled into base pay and thus do not count in overtime pay or retirement benefits.

No cost-of-living increase until inflation reaches 4%, that is, a cut in real wages of 4% every year.

Speeding up and pitting worker against worker by starting pay incentives to be awarded to workers in divisions that meet certain productivity and so-called "customer satisfaction" goals by division.

Even lower starting pay than new-hires currently receive.

A new tier of part-time workers that would get less pay than the present part-time flexibles, have fewer benefits and no guaranteed hours — only guaranteed hell.

Increasing the number of part-time and temporary workers to 30% of the work force, ensuring more profits to

management, and whetting management's appetite further to downsize the percentage of full-time career workers.

Cutbacks in employer funding of health benefits.

Cutbacks in sick leave and annual leave for new employees, and elimination of the ability to accumulate sick and annual leave from year to year.

Reducing or eliminating a number of work rules to make it easier for management to jerk workers around to different tasks, shifts and facilities.

Contracting out work to lower-paid and nonunion private contractors.

Attacks on mailhandlers and rural carriers

For mailhandlers they proposed a ceiling of 30,000 full-time career workers. The rest would be part-timers and casuals. At present there are 50,000 mailhandlers.

For the rural carriers, USPS negotiators wanted a starting wage for new-hires so low it would place them below the poverty level!

What are the union leaders doing about the contract?

Moe Biller, President of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), and Vince Sombrotto, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), denounced management's demands as "Tony's baloney." And they declared that the "emperor" (Frank) is "naked" and exposed.

But wait a minute. Who was it that promoted Anthony Frank as a fighter against privatization? As being gung-ho for better employee relations? Who invited him to address the Centennial Celebration of the NALC in August, 1989? Who introduced him as a leader "who has exhibited his concern about the Postal Service as an institution and its ability to function well into the 21st century"? You guessed it — the top union leaders.

Now, like jilted lovers, they are flinging curses at the former object of their affection. But does this mean they'll fight back? Don't count on it.

Here are two so-called leaders at the head of an army of over 600,000 postal workers. Why don't they mobilize this mighty force? Why not call protest marches across the country to build solidarity among postal workers and win support from other workers? Why not organize job actions, such as "working to rule," which could seriously disrupt mail processing? Why not build for a strike, like the one successfully carried out by postal workers in 1970? But, oh no! Biller and Sombrotto won't even launch a campaign for postal workers to have the right to strike.

The chances of Biller and Sombrotto mobilizing the rank and file are as remote as a supervisor doing an honest day's work. More than one emperor is coming naked out of these negotiations. Biller and Sombrotto have exposed their utter impotence in forcing any improvements out of the Postal Service.

Injured postal workers organize

A rebellion is brewing among injured postal workers in Detroit. On December 2, about 30 workers joined a "Mass Speakout" against the postal management's concerted crusade against injured workers. Clerks, letter carriers and mailhandlers — from the main post office on Fort Street, the Detroit Bulk Mail Center, and a series of postal stations — came to tell their own stories. And together they took initial steps to organize resistance.

The meeting was opened by an injured worker who explained how the "speak-out" had come about. He pointed out management's campaign to get rid of "light duty" and "limited duty" workers. He related how he and other workers had gone to the union leaders, to Congressional representatives, and the National Labor Relations Board, but that no one would give them any help. He also described some small skirmishes in which collective action had saved the jobs of injured workers. And he pointed out that this experience had shown the necessity for the rank-and-file workers to get organized on their own.

The floor was then taken by one injured worker after another who described the horrors of postal management mistreatment and their own experience in trying to fight back. Many had especially harsh words for the leaders of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC). The union officials have not lifted a finger to help the injured workers, and there is much bitterness against them.

People also spoke up to declare, "Never quit fighting." Some related how they had felt alone before, but now they are not discouraged because there's the possibility to organize collectively to fight back. And they thanked the *Detroit Workers' Voice*, (paper of the MLP--Detroit) for its efforts on behalf of the

injured.

In the end, the workers decided to carry out a petition campaign to push a number of demands, including: Bring back the laid off workers NOW; recognize the right to work with medical restrictions; stop delaying the Workers' Compensation claims; pay back all sick/annual leave and unpaid lay-off hours wrongly taken from those injured on the job; reverse all disciplinary action over injuries and related time off; safe job design and a safe pace of work.

The workers also decided to hold another meeting in which to set up organization and to plan further actions, such as a mass picket.

Job-related illness growing

Illnesses caused by working various jobs soared again last year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, they rose from 241,000 cases in 1988 to 284,000 in 1989 in private industry. On the job injuries also grew.

Most of the increase in illness was from repetitive motion disorders. There were 32,000 more cases of repetitive trauma illnesses in 1989 than in 1988. These result from repeating the same motions with arms and hands throughout the day, as occurs on assembly lines and at computer terminals.

Meanwhile, a study of health problems

of employees at regional phone companies was released October 5. It showed that electronically spying on the output of workers at video display terminals significantly increases VDT-related health problems such as aching wrists, back and neck woes, and fatigue.

Some 40 million Americans now work on VDTs. A 1987 report by the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, the most recent report on monitoring, estimated that four to six million clerical employees were monitored, most without their knowledge.

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Bush's dilemma: How to sell his oil war

George Bush is having trouble selling his war plans to the American people. Public opinion is getting more skeptical, an anti-war movement has begun to emerge, and there are stirrings of dissent in the ranks of the troops.

Many people have figured out that the Persian Gulf military adventure is meant to secure U.S. domination of world oil. And they don't see how it's worth shedding blood for the profits of the oil companies. The orgy of price-gouging by the oil billionaires hasn't helped Bush's cause much.

The result? Bush is enraged. He shouted against anti-war protesters at Republican election rallies last month, "This isn't oil we are concerned about. It's about naked aggression."

Worried about the government's problem with public confidence, newspaper editors, columnists, and experts galore have jumped up to beseech Bush to better explain to the people the great goals of the Persian Gulf war buildup. All echo in one voice, "We must have a single, easily explainable rationale to justify fighting."

The problem, however, is that there is no good reason for this war. The issue isn't one of Bush better justifying his war goals. No, the people are right to be suspicious of this war. If the editors and columnists were loyal to the people rather than being advisers to our ruler "King George," then they would denounce the Persian Gulf war drive.

Let's go through the different reasons that are being offered to justify new slaughter in the Middle East.

"Naked aggression"

Bush's favorite excuse lately has been that this war is about the high moral principle of stopping "naked aggression."

Be real. If invaded Kuwait had produced olives rather than oil, the U.S. wouldn't have given a damn. After all, there have been many other aggressions in the same region and what stand did Washington take then?

Iraq invaded Iran in 1980. The Reagan-Bush government backed Saddam Hussein in that effort. Israel invaded its neighbors in 1967 and carried out a brutal blitzkrieg in Lebanon in 1981. Again Reagan and Bush supported Israel. There's been no military buildup to free the Palestinians of the West Bank.

White racist South Africa invaded its black African neighbors many times, but Washington did not go into a war frenzy. The cozy support for apartheid South Africa remained undisturbed.

Besides, it's the worst hypocrisy for the U.S. to talk about standing up against "naked aggression." What did Bush do in Panama last Christmas, where more than 5,000 Panamanians were slaughtered and most buried in hidden mass graves? What did Reagan and Bush do in Grenada or Nicaragua?

The "nuclear threat"

These days the danger of Iraqi nuclear potential is being raised more and more. Supposedly, the U.S. must take out Saddam Hussein's military potential because he's just about ready to acquire nuclear bombs.

If that's the case, how come the government didn't see fit to raise the nuclear issue as one of the original reasons for the war drive?

That's because this issue has nothing to do with the current war effort. Saddam Hussein's desire to acquire nuclear potential isn't something that Bush just learned about. It's been known for years. But this didn't stop the government from developing close relations with the Iraqi regime during the last decade. Moreover, sources knowledgeable with Western intelligence on Iraq believe

that it will be years before Iraq can acquire serious nuclear weapons capability.

Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is indeed a serious problem. But imperialism isn't part of the solution, it's part of the problem. The U.S. has winked at Israel making the bomb, and all imperialism has taken part in feeding the militarization of this region.

Indeed, there have been other governments that have acquired the ability to make nuclear bombs and the U.S. hasn't seen fit to launch war on them. For example, besides Israel, South Africa too is well known to have atomic bombs.

On this issue too, the U.S. government is being hypocritical. Can we forget that Washington has so far been the only power that has used nuclear weapons against innocent people? Or that it has the biggest nuclear capacity in the world which it has repeatedly used to blackmail other peoples, for example, in Korea and Viet Nam?

The "new world order"

Of late there's been some talk about creating a "new world order." Catchy phrase that — Hitler used it too. But what does this mean today?

Clearly the world balance of powers is shifting. Soviet imperialism has collapsed as a world superpower. Germany and Japan have begun to do better than the U.S. economically. Smaller powers in various regions of the world may begin to exert themselves for greater local strength — for example, as Iraq has attempted. In this situation, the U.S. ruling class wants to make a renewed bid for maintaining world supremacy.

While U.S. economic strength has declined, it remains the world's most

powerful military power — with not only the biggest armed forces in the world but also the largest arms industry. In Bush's concept of "new world order," he wants to use Washington's role as No. 1 world policeman to win new economic and political advantages for the U.S. ruling class.

Bush's "new world order," as applied to the Gulf crisis, means not tolerating a regional upstart like Iraq forcibly changing the balance of power in the Gulf without U.S. approval. It also means using the Iraqi adventure into Kuwait as a reason to organize a direct U.S. military presence in the Gulf. Secretary of State Baker has already acknowledged that this will remain even after the current crisis is resolved.

In turn, this military presence can be used in the future to tell imperialist competitors of the U.S. like Japan and Germany (who lack much oil): we ensure you the oil from the Persian Gulf with our military power — in return you should give us this or that economic advantage. It's a protection racket in the making. This can already be seen in the demands that these, and other powers, chip in billions of dollars to maintain the U.S. military machine.

"Jobs"

Recently Secretary of State Baker made his attempt at a reason for the war. He said, "It's about jobs."

Supposedly Saddam Hussein threatens to strangle the U.S. economy by getting a greater share of control over the Persian Gulf's oil. He's blamed for the recession. This is so much nonsense.

A recession in the U.S. economy was already in the making before Saddam invaded Kuwait. Blame capitalism for

that. In addition, the economic crisis could be especially bad because of deep financial instability — and you can thank Reagan, Bush and the ruling billionaires for that.

It won't do to scapegoat Iraq for this crisis. Besides, even if Iraq had gained control of Kuwaiti oil, it wouldn't cause what Bush and Baker tell us. Iraq did not grab Kuwaiti oil to shut it off from the world; no, he wanted to make more money by selling it. He only wanted a somewhat higher price, which the U.S. oil companies and other oil interests also wanted.

Ironically, it hasn't been Iraq who raised the price of oil lately. It was the U.S.-led embargo and the speculation by the oil companies in the world market.

But if the U.S. is to go to war against anyone who unfairly grabs economic loot, why haven't we seen Bush declaring war on the S&L crooks? Or against the real estate speculators who've helped push many people into the ranks of the homeless?

It all comes down to oil

No matter how you have it, control over the oil-rich Persian Gulf is the bottom line in the current war buildup. It is a war for the profits of U.S. oil companies and their supremacy in the Middle East. In short, this is about "naked imperialism."

Is this a worthy cause for sons and daughters of the American working class to be killing Arabs over? Is this reason for our youth to come home in body bags for? Hell no!

No blood of the working class youth for the oil man's profits! ■

Making the Gulf safe for medieval-style tyranny

George Bush is having the damndest time selling his Persian Gulf war plans to the American people. In other times and places, the government could cook up lies about defending "freedom" and "democracy." But not with this war.

What's the Kuwaiti regime Bush wants to restore at the cost of the blood of Arab and American youth? What's the system in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies?

We often hear them described as "moderate Arab states." But there's nothing moderate in the relations between the rulers and ruled in these states. All these kingdoms have been ruled by royal families of immense wealth, who do not allow any rights to the majority of the population living and working there.

Recent events in Saudi Arabia confirm once more that democratic-minded people cannot support Bush's drive to prop up these oil-rich tyrannies.

No letup in the oppression of women

It is well known that women in Saudi Arabia are severely discriminated against. In fact, the kingdom practices a sexual apartheid that is one of the most extreme in the world — even worse than the mullahs in Iran.

Recently several dozen wealthy Saudi women drove themselves around in their Mercedes-Benzes through central Riyadh. This was done to challenge the custom that prevents women from driving.

And what was the outcome? The religious police stopped and arrested the women. The Saudi establishment roared its loud condemnation and the government swiftly moved to convert the customary ban into civil law.

Not even a mirage of democracy

It has also been implied that the Saudi people are about to get a whiff of democracy. This was based on King Fahd's announcement on November 8 that a long-promised consultative council will be set up "soon — God willing."

Sure. The kings of Saudi Arabia have made this promise several times before — at other moments when the ruling family has run into difficulties. But the proposed council has never come into existence.

Even if it did, however, it wouldn't mean much at all. This is no democratic organ that's being talked about. The Saudi kingdom is run by Fahd as an absolute monarchy. He rules by decree, his cabinet is all appointed by him, and most are members of the royal family. The talked-about consultative council will simply be made up of about 50 members who will be "faithful and responsible men" appointed by the king. There is no question about allowing voting rights to anyone.

Terror against immigrant labor

There is another side of Saudi society which is hardly ever brought up in the U.S. media. That's the fact that the Saudi kingdom is also notoriously racist and abusive towards foreign laborers.

Similar to the oil-rich Gulf sheikhdoms around it, most of the manual labor and even a good part of white-collar work is done by immigrant workers and employees. Many of the workers are Asians or Arabs from poor countries and they are treated in an ugly racist manner.

This isn't getting better, but worse. At

the beginning of November, Amnesty International reported that hundreds of immigrant workers from Yemen were detained and tortured by Saudi security forces. Hundreds of thousands of these workers have been expelled outright by the kingdom since the Gulf crisis began.

These people have been victimized for no other reason than their Yemeni nationality. The government of Yemen has refused to support the U.S.-led war buildup in the Gulf (although it has condemned the invasion of Kuwait). And this is enough for the Saudi kingdom to go seek revenge against Yemenis on its soil.

Clearly, there is nothing democratic about Saudi Arabia. Kuwait was very similar to this regime. Why does the U.S. government prop up such regimes? Because the U.S. rulers are imperialist and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Gulf sheikhdoms are outposts of the U.S. empire. They sit on huge oil riches, the profits from which go to the local royal families and the U.S. and other Western oil monopolies. They don't allow democracy so that this flow of profits isn't hampered by demands from the working people.

Bush, Congress and Wall Street may be served well by this backward social order. But it's not in the interest of the workers and youth of America. ■

Anti-war protests across the country

While Bush pushes ahead towards war in the Persian Gulf, anti-war feelings are spreading among working people and youth. More and more people are going into action.

10,000 people marched through Boston on Saturday, December 1. The protesters filled up Copley Plaza and marched to the Boston Common. There were some organized contingents from college and high school campuses, but the largest number seemed to have turned out by themselves or in groups of friends. There were lots of families with kids and babies in strollers. Like other anti-war protests around the country, the ranks of demonstrators included both those who had been active in the mass movements of the 60's and 70's, as well as a new generation of youth coming into political activity.

The march was spirited. And there was a great hunger for literature. People wanted to collect all the leaflets and

newspapers they could get. The MLP contingent distributed the 2,000 leaflets it had, and ran out just as the march started.

The same day, there were demonstrations elsewhere in Massachusetts and in Seattle.

The next day, over one hundred people marched through the Arab-American community in Dearborn, Michigan. Many people joined in from the community. The march rang out with slogans in Arabic and English: *Down with Bush's imperialist war!*, *Hell no we won't go, we won't fight for Texaco!* and *Long live the intifada! Down with zionism!*

These are only a few of the mass actions that have been spreading across the U.S. since Bush launched his military buildup in Saudi Arabia.

In November

In several places, actions were held

the day before Thanksgiving, November 21. San Francisco brought out 1,000 people. The demonstration started at the Chevron Oil building downtown and marched to the East Bay Terminal where Greyhound is based. Protesters also supported the Greyhound strikers. Police were not able to prevent activists from being in the streets.

Veterans Day weekend was also used as an occasion to take the message against Bush's oil war to the masses. In Boston, for example, anti-war veterans went to the annual Veterans Day parade that's organized by patriotic apologists for the ruling class. Police wouldn't allow them to join the official parade, but they marched behind with their anti-war signs. They were well received by many along the route, including homeless Viet Nam veterans.

And the day before, 100 people protested in Costa Mesa in conservative Orange County, south of Los Angeles. They handed out bumper stickers, buttons and flyers to Veterans Day shoppers. They got support from passers-by who honked and waved. The demonstrators included students and veterans.

As well, throughout the month there have also been demonstrations outside military bases and recruiting stations. Several dozen rallied outside the recruiting station in Seattle on November 17.

Many of these activists had also held a protest outside Fort Lewis near Tacoma on October 27.

A wave of actions on October 20

October 20 saw the biggest wave of anti-war protests to date. People marched in over 25 U.S. cities and abroad as well.

In New York City, 10,000 marched through the streets of Manhattan. Seven army reservists refusing to fight were introduced from the platform, and they were applauded for their stand. A huge police presence was organized, 500 strong. They harassed demonstrators in the feeder march from Harlem.

In San Francisco, about 4,000 protesters showed up. There were lively contingents of students. The MLP contingent had a good reception to slogans against the Democratic Party: *Democrats, Republicans, which are which? Both are warmongers for the rich!*

In Boston 700 people turned out for a march through downtown. Several hundred attended teach-ins on the next day.

In Seattle, 500 showed up at Seattle Central Community College and marched several miles downtown to the Westlake Mall. A large number were youth in their

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Liberals prepare country for a draft

Congressman John Conyers is one of the most liberal members of the Democratic Party and he is also a member of the Congressional Black Caucus. He has recently called for reviving the draft, with no deferments or exemptions. (*Michigan Chronicle*, Nov. 21-27)

You would expect the militarists to want the draft. But Conyers wants us to believe that he is a man of peace. According to Conyers, reviving the draft would be a step towards peace. Why? It would make the prospect of military hostilities repulsive to more people by supposedly spreading the sacrifice of military service "fairly" to the whole population. He paints the draft in anti-racist colors as a way to ensure that blacks and minorities and the poor are not disproportionately in the armed services.

Jesse Jackson too, ignoring the experience of U.S. aggression against Viet Nam, claims a draft would ensure fairness. One of his first acts as "shadow senator-elect" from Washington, D.C. was to call for Congress to reconsider the draft. (*Chicago Defender*, Nov. 14)

The real meaning of the draft

But what is the real purpose for a draft? Conyers himself admits that "If we go to war, a draft is inevitable. There would be no other way for the president to maintain the troop strength and numbers."

Doesn't this mean that the militarists need the draft in order to have sustained warfare? Doesn't this mean that by calling for the draft, Conyers is paving the way for more war?

Today the Pentagon is worried whether recruitment for the volunteer army can be maintained during a war crisis. And liberals like Conyers and Jackson have come out for the draft in advance.

Democratic Party wants to regiment the youth

Indeed, from its liberal wing to its "moderates," the Democratic Party has supported a universal youth service for years. Former President Carter reinstated registration for the draft. NOW and many bourgeois feminists insisted that any draft should include women. Later other Democrats called for national service, either in the military or in a civilian service as cheap labor, for all youth. When this didn't get instituted, a new proposal was put forward for national service for those youth who needed government financial help for college or other reasons.

And now the Democrats are again talking about the draft. This time the most liberal wing of the party is taking on itself the shame and notoriety of being the first to call for conscription.

Painting militarism in anti-racist colors

Conyers says that what distinguishes his draft from that of the militarists is that he is against any deferments. According to him, this will ensure that minorities and the poor don't bear the burden.

In fact, universal conscription would not end the extra burden on the minorities and the poor. The rich and privileged have long had favorable treatment within the military, and not just in escaping it. And today too, the numbers of blacks on the front lines is higher than their percentage in the armed services as a whole. As of mid-November, blacks were 29% of the troops in the Persian Gulf (according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff), although they are only 20% of total armed forces personnel. (*Detroit News*, Nov. 29)

For that matter, if the draft is reinstated, it is not likely to be done according to Conyers' prescriptions. Conyers' call for the draft will simply make it easier for the rich and privileged militarists to impose this hateful step upon the country whenever they see fit. They can even present themselves as more humane than Conyers by adding a few exemptions. Indeed, while saying he is opposed to the extra burden borne by the minorities and the poor, Conyers' proposal would ensure that not a single black or working class youth escaped regimentation.

Conyers holds that the harsher and more militarist laws that are passed, the more war will be repulsive. So he "fights" war by calling for a draft. He doesn't oppose the imperialist system, and expose its aggressive designs in the Middle East. He doesn't call for mass meetings of the working class to denounce the militarists. No, he calls for the draft, something he can do hand in hand with the imperialists and militarists.

But never fear. Conyers won't just vote for sending the youth to the trenches. We have no doubt that, if necessary, Conyers himself will make the extreme sacrifice. He will take on the militarists hand to hand in the front lines — of a House subcommittee negotiating the exact terms of the draft. He will bear the burden of haggling with the enemy — while lingering over expense account lunches. What a hero!



Protest at Armed Forces Recruiting Center in Seattle, Nov. 17



San Francisco Oct. 20



Marching in Dearborn, MI, Dec. 2

Should the anti-war movement 'defend Iraq'?

A new anti-war movement has emerged. Like any other mass movement, there are different ideas and political forces involved. To build this movement effectively, activists will have to sort through and talk over the different orientations and policies being offered.

The most serious problem in the movement has been the view advanced by liberals that the people should look for an alternative to war in the corridors of the UN or the halls of Congress. We've seen slogans like, "U.S. out, UN in!" or "No war without a debate in Congress." These ideas are a complete dead-end. The UN is providing the fig leaf for Bush's war, and Congress too has backed the Persian Gulf buildup. If we look to these bodies for stopping the war thrust, we might as well go home and cry ourselves to sleep.

There's another current of opinion which the Marxist-Leninist Party believes is also a problem for the anti-war movement. This is the stand of cheerleading for the Iraqi side. It is upheld by a series of groups claiming to be revolutionary, socialist and communist; it comes from virtually every left group which bases itself on Trotskyism or which originated as Trotskyists.

True, nearly every one of these groups (with the notable exception of the Workers' World Party) combines cheerleading for Iraq with criticism of Saddam Hussein. Their attitude is best described as "hold your nose and support Iraq." But this doesn't alter the basic issue — they see the Iraqi side in this war as a just cause deserving of support from workers worldwide.

Couched in anti-imperialist and Leninist colors, this view creates the unfortunate impression that a stand against imperialism means support for the tyranny of the Iraqi regime. This too undermines building a serious anti-war movement.

Sure, there's a lot of hot air about Iraq and its invasion of Kuwait that's come from the U.S. government and media. And that deserves to be opposed, such as the idea that the Kuwaiti monarchy was some sort of desirable regime whose restoration should be supported. But nobody needs to accept such hot air to realize that the Iraqi regime is a despicable tyranny, a police-state capitalist order that has no noble or progressive goals in the war. The working people and youth instinctively feel that way, and the anti-war movement should make this instinctive feeling clearer. It should not stand still for the fantasy that paints the Iraqi government or its invasion of Kuwait in glorious, liberation colors. There is no truth in that, and you can't build an anti-imperialist movement by playing fast and loose with the truth.

In this article, we want to show that the Trotskyist stand has nothing to do with anti-imperialism or Marxism-Leninism. We strongly believe that the Marxist-Leninist stand on the Persian Gulf war is that this is an unjust, reactionary war on both sides. It is a robbery war. The duty of the working class in the U.S. in such a war is to fight "the main enemy at home" — our capitalist ruling class. Meanwhile, to the working people of Iraq and the Middle East, we say they are right to oppose the U.S. imperialist buildup but they should not throw their support to the Saddam Hussein regime. To break the cycle of militarism, tyranny and capitalist exploitation, they need to build movements of the toilers against imperialism and all the local exploiters — whether they be Baathist militarists or medieval-style kings, sultans and sheikhs.

Let's look at some of the empty arguments that are being made on the side of the slogan "defend Iraq."

The war of an oppressed nation against imperialism

It is said that since Iraq is an oppressed nation, and faces imperialism, the left must stand on its side. Sometimes quotes from Lenin are dragged out to justify this argument. One example offered is the following:

"For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just,' and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressive, slave-holding and predatory 'Great Powers.'" (Lenin, *Socialism and War*, Collected Works, Vol. 21, pp. 300-301)

This is an example of quoting Lenin in order to tear out the heart of what he is saying.

The basic stand Lenin puts forward about wars in *Socialism and War* is to look at what politics preceded those wars. Lenin stressed that the materialist view of wars holds that war is a continuation of politics by violent means. When judging the sides in a war, it is necessary to examine what the sides have been aiming at throughout the historical period leading up to the war.

For example, says Lenin, there is the question of colonies and dependent countries fighting for their independence against the oppressors.

How does this compare to the present situation in the Persian Gulf? There is no doubt that imperialism is still playing havoc in the Middle East. And Bush's aim is to reinforce U.S. hegemony throughout the region. But we deny that the confrontation of Iraq with U.S. imperialism today has any parallel to the hypothetical wars Lenin was discussing concerning Morocco, etc.

Lenin was describing wars of national liberation. Some of these countries were outright colonies like India. The wars of India, Morocco, etc. would have been wars launched by national movements for independence.

The Iraqi regime and its war aims do not qualify. Iraq is not seeking independence in this confrontation, but the status of a powerful regional force that can throw its weight around in the Middle East. It is not an abject colony or protectorate where the struggle for independence overshadows the class struggle, but a country where the local exploiters suppress the masses with great ferocity. Iraq is not being blockaded because it took steps in support of its toilers which imperialism could not tolerate, but as part of a capitalist power struggle.

There is no doubt sentiment among the Iraqi and Arab toilers against imperialism, and we have always supported that, but Saddam Hussein's regime has nothing to do with an anti-imperialist movement of the Iraqi people.

What were Saddam Hussein's aims in this war? What were the politics leading up to the current confrontation?

He went into Kuwait not to seek the liberation of the Kuwaiti people from the oil-rich despot there, but for money. He wanted his debts paid off and he wanted a greater share of oil. The debts he had incurred were not from some project to free the Iraqi people from dependence on imperialism, but to wage his bloody, reactionary war with Iran.

Indeed, Saddam did not consider a confrontation with imperialism. He thought he would be allowed to grab Kuwait. That's because the Iraqi regime has been making deals with imperialism, both the Western powers and the Soviet Union, and they have built up his regime and his economic and military strength.

No thanks, we can't see how Saddam's war is a war of an oppressed nation

against imperialism. Lenin wasn't wrong, but the Trotskyists who mutilate his ideas are.

"Military, not political, support"

The Trotskyist groups are fond of saying they don't support Saddam. Why, they only stand for military defense of Iraq while refusing political support for Saddam.

This is a total fraud. In the real world, in serious politics, you can't separate the military from political. If you give the war effort of a certain power support, then inevitably that means giving that side some type of political support. The military effort is merely the outcome of that power's politics. As well, one's actual political stand is measured by what stand one takes towards major events like wars.

It is possible that one's support for one side in a war might be partial or limited or critical. This would have to be spelled out. If it was not to be simple hypocrisy, it would have to have some meaning other than simply a verbal flourish.

But war is part of politics, a continuation of politics by violent means. So how can one separate military and political matters, as the Trotskyists do? Would one have to regard "military support" as relating to the real world (which side do you support?) and "political support" to the realm of empty phrases and hypocritical declarations (where's Saddam's latest book?)? Or would one have to say that foreign policy is just a military matter, while only internal issues are political (of course, in Iraq the military is employed freely against the people, such as the Kurds)?

Interestingly, while the Trotskyists quote Lenin on wars of oppressed countries, they ignore the fact that Lenin didn't advance any nonsense about giving "military, not political, support" to such wars. He did not speak of "military, but not political" support to a war of liberation by Morocco, India, etc. Instead he gave firm political support to the national liberation movement against imperialism.

In fact the formula of "military, not political, support" isn't Lenin's. And it isn't Leninist or Marxist or materialist. In contemporary politics it's become a formula for supporting reactionary regimes. In the early 80's it was used to justify supporting the Argentine generals in war with British imperialism, which was a reactionary war on both sides. Some groups used it to justify support for the Russian army and its client regime in Afghanistan, thus supporting both an imperialist power and a local reactionary regime. And the followers of Tony Cliff, the International Socialists current, used it to justify supporting the Iranian mullahs against the U.S. in the Persian Gulf face-off a few years back.

But the Saddam Hussein regime is so odious, so repulsive that the Trotskyists have a hard time making their case. Thus some groups offer "creative twists" on their pet formula. One group, the Revolutionary Communist Workers' Organization, in Detroit, tried to float an alternative, something to the effect of "For temporary neutrality towards the Iraqi government; no political support for the political program of the Saddam Hussein regime." But in reality it was no alternative, other than being near-to-incomprehensible.

Does desiring defeat for U.S. imperialism mean desiring victory for Iraq?

The Trotskyist position boils down to asking for Saddam Hussein's victory in the war with the U.S. From the point of narrow, "practical" politics, this may seem reasonable. Two sides are fighting. If one opposes one side, then it must

mean supporting the other.

But such an argument means only being able to see the existing regimes. It means ignoring the toilers and the mass struggles. It means believing that there is nothing in the Middle East worth considering but the oppressive regimes like Saddam's.

We however think that the anti-war forces should encourage the Middle Eastern toilers and their liberation struggle. But to say that one must back either Bush or Saddam means to overlook the oppressed masses and to write off work to encourage their liberation struggle. It means believing that the oppressed masses will never rise.

We think that as long as the struggle is simply Bush versus Saddam, it is a losing proposition no matter what the outcome — whether it is victory for one or the other side, or a deal in which they come together at the expense of the toiling masses. We hold instead that the working people should stand up to the war machines of each side.

It is similar to what happens in elections here. The liberals say that it is the Democrats versus the Republicans. If you want to defeat the Democrats, then you must be helping the Republicans. They laugh at the idea of the independent movement of the working class. And they end up lying about how the Democrats are doing some things for the people.

Similarly, having reduced things to Bush versus Saddam, the Trotskyist groups end up painting the wildest fantasies about the benefits of an Iraqi victory. We are told that this would open the way to the class struggle, how it would create a Pan-Arab anti-imperialist rebellion, etc. Instead of looking at what the Iraqi regime is actually doing to Arab radicals, we are told to dream about how the Iraqi regime, despite itself, will open the way to such marvelous prospects.

The Freedom Socialist Party is given to some of the wildest fantasizing. They write that an Iraqi victory would mean an anti-imperialist revolt of huge proportions which would naturally also be an anti-capitalist revolt. They write, "coffins are already being prepared for the Arab bourgeoisie."

This is just day-dreaming. The Iraqi regime does not have anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist goals. Saddam Hussein wants to reach a new deal with imperialism, and he wants to strengthen the profit-making of his local capitalists in the region, not undermine it.

Of course, no doubt coffins are already being prepared. It is the Iraqi regime which is doing this, and it has been doing it for a long time. Only these coffins are not for the Arab bourgeoisie, but for the Kurds, for the dissenters, for the protesters, for the thousands upon thousands of soldiers who die in one after another of Saddam's military adventures.

The only way there could be an anti-capitalist revolt is with a new upsurge of the toilers in the Middle East. This isn't going to be ushered in by Hussein, but will require the rebuilding, reorientation and strengthening of the progressive movements in the region. Today, these movements are weak or, in the case of the Palestinian struggle, facing difficult problems of orientation. They also have to deal with the rise of the Islamic fundamentalists, who are trying to make headway in the present situation.

Of course, if the war breaks out in the Gulf, it may have far-reaching consequences, destabilize a number of pro-imperialist regimes, and echo for years. But progressive consequences will not come through the agency of the present Iraqi regime, but as an inadvertent outcome desired as little by Hussein as by Bush.

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4th National Conference of the MLP, USA Fall 1990

Editorial

The mid-term elections demonstrated that the Republicans and Democrats have really nothing to offer the working people but war, racism, anti-woman bigotry, S&L ripoffs, and unemployment. Signs of disillusionment with the capitalist politicians are seen everywhere.

The Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP) is working to turn the mass discontent to militant action and the building up of an independent working class movement. Important in this is inspiring the masses with an alternative to this capitalist hell — workers' socialism, which shows that there can be a future without exploitation and without capitalist bureaucrats and politicians riding on their backs.

This fall the Party held its Fourth National Conference. It concentrated on the collapse of pro-Soviet revisionism and fake "socialism"; the theory of socialism and the history of the Soviet Union; and the struggle for women's rights. It also reviewed other issues, including the situation in the Party, and the state of the world revolutionary movement.

The collapse of revisionism

The MLP has long criticized the fraud of socialism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. In the last year or two, the decay of revisionism has given way to the collapse of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe, the disintegration in the Soviet Union, the crisis in China, and so forth. One regime after

another has tumbled into openly "free market" economies, and there is a growing abandonment of communist pretensions. These events have shaken up the world, and there are many changes that must be dealt with by the workers' movement. The conference discussed the repercussions of these changes, from the change in the international balance of power among the imperialists to the mood of liquidationism within various revisionist and trotskyst groups.

Socialism is the goal of the working class

The MLP firmly holds that workers' socialism remains the goal of the working class movement. It contrasts workers' socialism to revisionist state capitalism, and it seeks to clarify the conception of socialism.

The conference devoted much time to discussing the Party's ongoing study of the history of the communist movement in the Soviet Union. It looked further into the problems of the 1920's and early 1930's. And it also considered certain theoretical questions with respect to the transition from capitalism to socialism that are raised by this history, for example, with regards to the economy, to the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to party building.

The struggle for women's liberation

Several points of the agenda were

devoted to the women's movement. The conference summed up the recent abortion rights struggles, especially the militant defense of health clinics. It also discussed the experience of the women's movement of the 1960's and 70's, the struggle which arose between the different trends, and the class stands that these trends represented. And it debated some theoretical questions that had come up in the party-wide study of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the struggle for the complete liberation of women.

The conference emphasized the importance of developing agitation on key issues of concern to working class women; the work to drive a wedge between the bourgeois feminists, who are holding back the movement, and the masses of working women and activists; and encouraging especially those struggles that impel the working masses into militant independent action.

Other mass movements

The conference considered the movement against the war drive in the Persian Gulf. The whole party has been active in this struggle, and the discussion emphasized the importance of directing the fire of this movement against imperialism.

The conference also talked over our experience in the struggle of the New York transit workers and other economic resistance of the workers. In this, it noted the value of combining non-party forms of agitation and organization with party forms. Where there is actual mass motion, non-party forms can at times help to activate militants and draw broader sections of the masses into

action independent of the union bureaucracy. But these forms need to be combined with direct Party agitation, and work for pro-party forms of organization, in order to guide the movement in a truly independent direction and to build up the influence of the Party itself.

It also pointed to the need both to encourage mass motion and to criticize the reformist trends, and such criticism inevitably requires hitting at the revisionist and Trotskyist groups that trail behind the reformists.

Build the party of the working class

The conference reviewed some problems of party work in the current situation. Internationally, it reviewed the situation among the forces of workers' communism around the world. The collapse of revisionism, the degeneration of Albania and the parties which trail in its wake, and experience of the present mass struggles show the necessity to build up the trend of workers' communism. It is this trend which seeks to carry the struggle against revisionism through to the end and to take account of the experience of the working class. This trend is today weak and scattered, and it is necessary for the communist activists to strive hard to seek theoretical clarity, to immerse this trend in the ongoing struggles, and to forge fraternal collaboration between the groups and activists in different lands.

And the conference passed six resolutions on the current tasks of the class conscious workers and activists. ■

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

The blockade of Iraq, the positioning of American bases in the Middle East, and the chorus of Bush and Congress in favor of U.S. hegemony in the region show that the American government is out to strengthen its imperialist hold on the Middle East. The buildup of nearly a half million U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf and the shouts of Bush to prepare for an offensive show that the American bourgeoisie is prepared to plunge the region into an all-out shooting war. The working class and all progressive people must oppose the present aggression and the threatened war.

This is imperialist aggression and it would be an imperialist war. It would be a war for the profits of the oil monopolies. It would be a war to shore up medieval-style kingdoms, like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It would be a war for U.S. domination in the region, for the spread of American military bases, and to establish that U.S. imperialism is still the policeman of the world, marauding and dictating wherever it wishes.

Such a war would mean death, destruction and continued plunder for the peoples of the Middle East. At the same time, it would mean stepped-up oppression at home. The working people in the

U.S. are being asked to risk their sons and daughters, to pay the price of increased taxes and more cuts in social programs, to suffer price gouging at the gas pumps, and to be victimized by a new racist crusade directed against Arab residents in the U.S. And for what? So that a few capitalists can reap obscene oil profits and the imperialist system can maintain its plunder of the Gulf region.

Workers, youth, and all progressive people should join together to denounce and oppose this present aggression and threatened war. And we should direct the struggle first and foremost at our own bourgeoisie, and its imperialist system which stands behind the war drive.

Support the oppressed toilers

Opposition to U.S. imperialism does not mean, however, to defend the Iraqi regime or support its invasion of Kuwait.

The regime of Saddam Hussein is a capitalist tyranny which stamps down on all democratic rights, savagely represses the Kurdish people, and tramples the working people. It has received aid and support from the imperialist powers in the past, including the Reagan and Bush administrations, and still seeks such an accommodation today.

Its invasion of Kuwait was not to liberate the Arab toilers from the rich Kuwaiti despots nor to break the hold of imperialism on the region. Rather, it was launched to liquidate the huge debts Iraq owed from the reactionary war with Iran, to grab a greater share in the imperialist oil profits, and to push Hussein's regime forward as a regional power.

The U.S. working people cannot take either side in this war. Rather, we must stand up against our own imperialist rulers and give support and encouragement to the struggle of the Middle Eastern masses. We must support the struggles of the toilers and the migrant laborers against their own despots as well as Israeli zionism and U.S. imperialism. We must support the liberation movements of the Palestinians, Kurds and other oppressed peoples of the region.

Base the anti-war movement on the masses

To build up the movement against the imperialist war, we cannot look for support from Congress against Bush. Congress has backed the war buildup, and the Democrats have joined the Republican chorus in praise of imperialism. Both of these are parties of imperi-

alism who, despite some wrangling over tactics, agree that the bottom line is to protect the oil profits and "vital interests" of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

Nor can we look for help from the United Nations. This forum is a grouping of governments and diplomats who can only reflect the current world balance of power among the exploiters and imperialists who rule today. The United Nations has sided with the U.S., given the green light for aggression, and put an "international" gloss on this rotten military adventure of U.S. imperialism.

Nor can we expect much from what is referred to as "the Arab solution." We should indeed demand that the imperialists get out of the Middle East, and that the people of the region should be allowed to deal with their own problems. But we must place our support firmly behind the Arab and other toilers of the region, and not behind the local elites and repressive ruling classes who regard their conferences and wishes as the Arab solution. The U.S. aggression in the Middle East is, in fact, either supported or even spurred on by various Arab

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4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

The present recession and the prospects for mass struggle

Recession is here. This downturn may deepen into a big crisis, or such a crisis may emerge somewhat later. In either case a deep economic crisis seems inevitable. The measures taken by the capitalists throughout the '80's to fend off recession have prepared conditions for a deeper crisis, for example by undermining the financial stability of the system.

Can the bourgeoisie use a new war to get out of crisis? That is, can another round of vast arms spending stimulate the economy? But the Reagan-Bush administrations have already done this for the last decade and helped pile up a federal debt that itself threatens a crash. The capitalists may desire a war in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere for other reasons, but it doesn't look like it will get them out of their economic troubles. On the contrary, it may deepen them.

Meanwhile the ongoing capitalist offensive of the 80's is continuing into the 90's, and it has been marked by a wage-cutting drive, and repression of workers' struggles.

Social benefits have been slashed in virtually every sphere, while the multimillionaires have been granted one tax break after another. While unemployment has mounted and homelessness has become a national scandal, the so-called "safety net" has been cut and torn. While the economic infrastructure of the country has decayed, the ruling class has played with speculation and real estate deals, with junk bonds and banking deals, with mergers and leveraged buyouts.

The takeback offensive has hit oppressed nationalities especially hard. Meanwhile a climate of open racism has also been encouraged, and a growing wave of racist attacks has been taking place across the country.

A reactionary drive against women has focused on removing the right of

abortion.

And militarism is resurgent with a huge increase in the military budget, and a series of imperialist outrages from El Salvador and the contra war against Nicaragua, to the invasions of Grenada and Panama. And now there is the ongoing brinkmanship in the Persian Gulf.

Although the workers and poor have been hit hard by the takeback offensive of the 1980's, strong resistance has yet to break out on a large scale. There are a number of reasons for this.

Not all sections of the workers have been hit equally hard. The bourgeoisie used certain special social programs to temporarily cushion the shock for some categories of workers until anger had subsided and the threat of mass action has passed. Some of the historically militant sectors of the working class have been dispersed, and many young workers have been forced out of major industries. They have been pushed into unorganized sectors where it is most difficult to launch struggles. Masses of workers have been pushed into small plants and into the service sector, and many are either working part-time or outright unemployed. All this has acted against the outbreak of united resistance.

The top trade union leaders have joined wholeheartedly in the concessions drive. The pro-capitalist stand of the trade union officials has served to blunt the struggles that have taken place, and it has hindered the workers from rendering real aid to those struggles that gained mass sympathy. Overcoming this treachery requires a high level of rank-and-file initiative, which has still not emerged on a large scale.

The black bourgeois leadership has similarly acted to block militant mass struggle against the racist offensive.

Reformist and pro-capitalist leaders of other mass political or social movements that have arisen, such as the anti-war movement and the women's movement, have also held the masses back from challenging the bourgeoisie. The strategy of looking towards the bourgeois liberals — and generally Congress, the Democratic Party, the trade union officialdom, and some religious figures — has served to undermine these movements and keep them from penetrating deeply among the working masses.

Nevertheless the elements for a new upsurge of struggle have accumulated in the course of the 1980's.

Although they have been sporadic and scattered and lasted only for a time, a variety of struggles against the capitalists and the government periodically broke out. There were a number of important strikes, while the sweep of the economic cutbacks involved wider and wider sections of the workers. The financial scandals and general decay have begun to shake the confidence of the masses in the stability of the present system and cause a generalized worry and discontent.

There were also a series of other political and social movements. The anti-nuclear energy and anti-draft movements were followed by the anti-nuclear weapons struggles and the movements against intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The anti-apartheid movement made its mark for awhile. The resurgence of racism was met by numerous anti-racist struggles, including some local rebellions. The pro-choice movement stirred wide masses of people, while clinic defense against the religious fanatics brought a number of new people into militant struggle. There were also other movements, such as defense of the environment against corporate polluters. Taken all together, these movements

have involved hundreds of thousands of people. The real-life experiences gained in them are a preparation for bigger struggles to come.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party "honeymoon" of the 80's with the Reagan-Bush administration shows signs of breaking down. In the last decade, the Democratic Party not only gave the capitalist offensive their uncomplaining endorsement but generally rubber-stamped the Reagan-Bush policies. With an economic crisis developing and with the crisis in the Persian Gulf threatening to explode in their faces, the bipartisanship of the 1980s will come under increasing strain. The capitalist parties will squabble more and more over how to carry out the offensive and how to restore mass confidence in the system as it sickens. These disputes can provide opportunities for the masses to come out in struggle. The workers should not side with any of the gangs of bourgeois thieves but instead utilize these opportunities by putting forward the workers' own independent stand.

The masses are increasingly left with little choice but to stand up and struggle to defend their own interests. But to take such a bold step does not happen easily. They must grasp that neither Congress, nor the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom, stands on their side. They need confidence in their ability to take matters into their own hands.

The Marxist-Leninist Party must continue to encourage the path of mass action and militant organization. The seeming omnipotence of the bourgeoisie is dispelled through actual experience. The Party's job is to find ways to draw the working class, youth, and all oppressed people into such struggle, utilizing whatever openings, large or small, that present themselves. ■

On the pro-choice movement

The current anti-abortion crusade in the U.S. is directed first and foremost at working and poor women. It is they who will suffer from back alley abortions.

Nor is the anti-abortion drive just about taking away abortion rights. It is an offensive to degrade women, to justify stripping them of rights won in struggle. And in this too working women will suffer most.

The anti-abortion movement is also a pro-rich, pro-war movement to recruit mindless foot soldiers for the whole reactionary offensive against the working class at home and for imperialist adven-

tures abroad. The working and poor women and the working masses in general have the most stake in the fight for abortion rights and against the anti-abortion crusade.

It is only on the basis of mobilizing the working masses that the fight for abortion rights and women's emancipation can move forward.

The fight to defend abortion rights has been particularly intense over the past two years. Thousands of women and pro-choice men came out to confront the anti-abortion fanatics and defend the health clinics. Hundreds of thousands participated in mass demonstrations for abortion rights.

The clinic defense movement and the larger pro-choice movement have been a blow to the anti-abortion drive. Faced with mass resistance the bourgeoisie has combined the tactics of frontal assault on abortion rights with chipping away at women's rights and piecemeal harassment. At present the capitalist government and the anti-abortion movement are regrouping for another offensive.

The bourgeois women's organizations such as NOW and NARAL have held back the pro-choice movement of the last two years from developing as a militant struggle of the working masses. They opposed giving a militant reply to the forces blockading the women's health clinics, and they even publicly denounced

the militants. They sought to stop the masses from confronting the capitalist establishment, and instead channel them into supporting the police, the courts, repressive laws, and capitalist politicians, mainly Democrats but also some Republicans. This is because the leaders of NOW and other pro-capitalist women's leaders are aspiring to positions in that same establishment for themselves. Even when they called some big demonstrations in Washington D.C. their message was to rely on the establishment, not on mass initiative, while in the past year they have more and more opposed even the mildest demonstrations.

These policies of the bourgeois women's organizations have resulted in frittering away a good deal of the pro-choice movement that had blossomed. NOW's policy of non-confrontation has helped give space to the anti-abortion movement to regroup. And their preaching of faith in police and courts and politicians has taken pressure off the government apparatus, giving it a freer hand to attack abortion rights from above. In order to preserve the gains of struggle, there has to be a determined struggle against the influence of NOW and the bourgeois women's organizations.

The militant clinic defense movement had emerged despite the opposition of the bourgeois women's organizations,

and it had pushed forward the whole movement. In many areas clinic defense organizations emerged to organize the defense of the clinics when NOW would not. These organizations attracted new activists who wanted to go beyond what was acceptable to the NOW leadership, and who carried out militant defiance of the enemies of women's rights. These activists often became disgusted with NOW's opposition to militancy and mass action. This provided the opportunity to build up an anti-establishment trend among the pro-choice movement, but in itself was not yet recognition of the reasons for the treachery of NOW and other bourgeois women's groups nor of the need to consciously build up a mass trend opposed to the bourgeois world.

Yet none of the major clinic defense organizations saw the need to speak to the masses about the differences between them and the bourgeois women's organizations or even to look closely into this themselves. Many of the reformist left groups that generally dominated the leadership of the clinic defense organizations directly tried to find ways to accommodate with and conciliate NOW. Such reformist groups promoted the view that NOW and the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom and community leaders could be persuaded or pushed or forced into

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governments.

To fight this war drive we must, rather, look to the masses — in the Middle East and in the U.S. We must direct our efforts to building a movement in the U.S. among the workers, the poor, the youth, and the dissenting soldiers and sailors. It is the masses who reap no benefits from this war buildup and are suffering from it. It is the working people who have the most interest in fighting against the war drive and who are most suspicious of the profit-grabbing system that stands behind it. ■

4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

The collapse of revisionism will unleash a new struggle for socialism

Over the last few years, the world has witnessed the collapse of Soviet revisionism. Revisionist regimes have fallen in most East European countries. And the rule of the Soviet revisionists is tottering. This is a major world event, and the lessons drawn from it will influence for years on end workers and activists all over the globe.

The collapse of revisionism has intensified the ideological campaign of the bourgeoisie about socialism. What hasn't socialism been blamed for? Whether it is tyranny in the revisionist countries or high taxes in the West, every blemish and crime of capitalist society is being blamed on "socialism" and "collectivism." Today the revisionist parties are joining this chorus of the Western bourgeoisie, jettisoning the communist labels they misused for so long, and singing the praises of Western capitalism.

What collapsed was not socialism, but another form of capitalism. The fall of Eastern European revisionism has shown the inner workings of revisionist rule. It has confirmed the stand of the anti-revisionists who have long opposed the revisionist regimes as state-capitalist regimes of exploitation. It has shown that behind their hollow facades these regimes were a bureaucratic tyranny hated by the masses. A class of privileged bureaucrats ruled, while the working class remained exploited and at the bottom of the heap.

In Eastern Europe a bureaucratic form of capitalism has fallen. A free-market form of capitalism is being established, and this is proving no salvation for the working people. So far, it has brought them the "shock therapy" of mass unemployment, impoverishment, the gutting of social programs, etc. It has brought a revival of bigotry of all sorts — national prejudices, anti-semitism and religious intolerance, anti-women oppression, etc.

The new order has not only pressed the workers economically, but it has left them at the bottom of the heap. A new ruling class is being formed. Many of the old state-capitalist bureaucrats have become the new capitalist directors, and new exploiters have rushed in to make

their fortune.

The workers who fought against the old regimes now face the first steps of struggle against the new Western-style capitalist order. The ideological confusion and intense prejudices against Marxism in these countries, the view that the hated old order was socialist, and the general lack of organization and political experience, will make these steps slow and halting, with many zigzags and reverses. But the path is being cleared for the workers' movement to rise again in these countries.

Socialism remains the path of liberation for the working class and oppressed masses.

Socialism is not monopoly capitalism with an increased role of the government. It is neither state capitalism, nor the welfare state, nor the state sector in a mixed economy.

Socialism is the struggle of the working class to do away with class society, in which a privileged minority rules and exploits the majority. Socialism is the rule of the working masses on the path of transition towards a communist, classless society. Such a society is the emancipation of the masses from the tyranny of money and the profit system.

Socialism is not just a moral utopia. It has been made possible and necessary by the development of large-scale production. This has resulted in the development of a disciplined working class, and it has provided possibilities of liberation for the masses. Yet under capitalism it has also brought devastation, environmental pollution, weapons of mass slaughters, etc. Only socialism can utilize the gigantic forces unleashed by modern, scientific large-scale production in the interests of humanity as a whole.

The workers have risen up for socialism in the past, and shook the capitalist world. The goal of eliminating capitalist exploitation and the tyranny of money, the goal of eliminating fratricidal divisions between working people and uniting toilers around the entire globe, has inspired the working class to heroic revolutionary efforts. Although the past

attempts to build socialist societies were strangled and failed, this doesn't mean that the working class will give up now. Agitation for socialism remains an essential task of any movement wishing to arouse the deepest revolutionary enthusiasm of the toilers.

The international trend supporting Soviet revisionism has been broken up and thrown into disarray. It is dropping the communist and Leninist labels in one country after another. The largest pro-Soviet revisionist parties are declaring themselves social-democratic. The old pretensions are dead.

This does not mean that the revisionist trends are gone and the struggle against them can be forgotten. They still maintain influence as large reformist groupings. Their new views reinforce the bourgeois campaign against socialism and revolution, while some remnants still try to hang onto the old system. But the struggle against revisionism will have to adjust to the new developments, both ideological and political, in the revisionist and opportunist world.

The collapse of revisionism has profound implications for the world balance of powers. It has smashed up the old alignment among the imperialist powers. The world used to be dominated by the rivalry of the two imperialist superpowers, the U.S. and the USSR, and their blocs, although there was a tendency for the other major imperialist powers in the Western bloc to flex their muscles. The collapse of revisionism has left U.S. imperialism dominant, as the remaining superpower, but the trend continues towards a multi-polar world, marked by the rivalry of several great powers. And there are also attempts by smaller capitalist powers to assert themselves.

The collapse of revisionism and the end of the cold war has affected those regimes and movements which sought to play one superpower against the other. Yet as the new world situation emerges, it will tend to bring the class and liberation struggles out of the shadow of the old U.S.-USSR rivalry.

Despite the chatter about a new world

order and peace dividends, we still live in the era of imperialism. There are new threats of instability, and there will be new rivalries and conflicts to determine the pecking order in the new situation. The events in the Persian Gulf war are a prime example.

The Marxist-Leninist Party has from the outset opposed Soviet revisionism. The activists who founded the Party and its predecessors did so because they were convinced of the harmfulness and bourgeois nature of the revisionist and opportunist trends. Since then the Marxist-Leninist Party has stood intransigent against the revisionist system and supported the oppressed working class in these countries. We have opposed the reformist treachery and petty-bourgeois democratic illusions promoted by world revisionism, and also its bureaucratic tyranny over the masses. Today we welcome the fiasco of revisionism and work for a renewal of workers' communism.

In the anti-revisionist struggle, the Marxist-Leninist Party has not stood still. We have dealt with the changing issues brought to the fore by the problems in the revolutionary movement, from petty-bourgeois nationalism to capitulationist views of united front tactics. We are criticizing the different opportunist trends that have come to the fore, including trotskyism. We have subjected the experience and views of the struggles of the past to critical analysis.

And we have been emphasizing the need for a deeper analysis of socialism, distinguishing it from fashionable ideas that have been proven wrong. We are devoting attention to the study and assessment of the history of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union and its attempts to carry out the transition to socialism. This effort eventually failed, strangled from outside and corrupted by revisionism from within. Yet this revolution was one of the most profound moments of working class history, and it must be closely studied by the working class as it prepares for its future assaults against capital.

The working class needs its own voice

The mid-term elections this year saw grave discontent with the capitalist parties. The politicians told the masses to do nothing but be passive and vote, while the people were cynical about the mud-slinging campaigns, the empty promises, the rampant corruption.

What is the alternative?

The working class needs its own voice, its own political organization. The more the workers seek to rise in action for their general class interests, the more the need for an overall political organization becomes evident. To stand up as a political force in its own right, to challenge bourgeois rule and not just individual acts of oppression and exploitation, the working class needs not only economic organizations and broad organizations devoted to particular fronts of the struggle, but to build up a revolutionary party itself. This is why activists founded the Marxist-Leninist Party, and seek to build it as a contingent of world workers' communism.

Unlike the bourgeois parties that tell the people to trust in the rulers, the proletarian party calls on the workers to

take matters into their own hands. On one front after another, the masses wish for a stand that expresses their point of view and their militance. In the last period, among the national political forces, it has been the Marxist-Leninist Party that has fought to develop this independent stand in the mass movements. In the pro-choice movement, for example, the party gave a national aspect to resistance to the line of pro-establishment reformism. In the economic movement, the Party has encouraged every tendency to break free of the labor bureaucrats and has sought to give a broader sweep to the scattered fights against the capitalist offensive.

This is a time when few new activists and workers have come forward to take up the tasks of party-building themselves. Yet the party's work has found sympathy among the working masses, and it has maintained links with them. The maintenance of the party during this period has been essential for maintaining a national voice of the working class, to carrying out vital ideological and theoretical work to provide new orientations for

the revolutionary movement, and to preserving that link with the experience of past struggles that is vital for a conscious approach to the new struggles that are coming.

Actions may be small at present. But actions in working class neighborhoods,

work place struggles that take place despite the pro-capitalist labor officialdom and independent of the bounds they set, anti-racist struggles, clinic defense actions, etc. maintain the class struggle.

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organizing a really big movement in favor of the rights of working women. This was a harmful fantasy that flew in the face of the actual experience of the women's movement.

The experience of the pro-choice movement has aroused a greater consciousness among wide masses of working women of the need to fight for their rights. Moreover, the massive growth of the female labor force, and the devastation wreaked by the capitalist offensive, has made the fight for equal pay, for child care, and other rights for working class women all the more pressing. New

battles over women's rights are bound to break out.

We must continue to improve our agitation for women's rights, including around issues of particular concern to working women. We must link up with the struggles that break out, and pay special attention to seeking out those issues on which the struggle has the strongest tendency to go beyond the bounds set by the establishment women's groups. And we must organize the working masses, and all progressive defenders of women's rights, into a trend consciously distinct from the pro-establishment movement, and imbue this independent movement with confidence in its own strength.

4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

Build the world movement for workers' communism

All around the world fuel is accumulating for the new outbreaks of the class struggle.

The economic and financial impasse in the U.S. and other imperialist heartlands is tightening the squeeze on the workers and poor. The impoverishment of the less developed countries is reaching desperate levels, while proletarianization is increasing the ranks of the working class. The collapse of revisionist state capitalism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere is bringing the role of capital into the open with austerity governments and the so-called "shock treatment" of unemployment and poverty. Meanwhile imperialism and capitalism are preparing new disasters, from slaughter in the Persian Gulf to ecological calamities.

There have been powerful revolts in a number of countries, including Korea, Nepal, Palestine, El Salvador and South Africa. The times cry out for the development of a world movement of the oppressed.

Yet the revolutionary movement is disorganized and disunited. Everywhere the mass struggles face the forces of reformism and accommodation, the influence of bourgeois and other non-

working class theories, the siren songs of petty-bourgeois nationalism, liberalism and above-class democracy, and of benevolent despotism. The revisionists have helped spread these influences, but their collapse does not automatically create a revolutionary trend.

There must be dedicated work to build up revolutionary organization. In the first place, the communist forces of the working class must be built up. The class conscious workers bring organization to the masses and give them revolutionary perspective. There are already activists fighting to develop such forces among the workers in some countries. And the conditions will inevitably give rise to such forces elsewhere.

The Marxist-Leninist Party, USA is part of these world forces of workers' communism.

Workers' communism — because that is its class foundation, where it centers its focus. Not on the liberals, not on the trade union bureaucrats, not on the reformist leaders, but on the rank and file, the growing army of wage slaves around the world.

Communism — because the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin is the

only direction out of this capitalist hell. The communist theory that sheds light on the path of the class struggle, on how to build the working class party and the solid organization for the struggle and overthrow of the capitalists. The communist society that is the highest creation of the transition to socialism. Not the fake socialism of the fat bureaucrat that we see disintegrating in the state-capitalist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but the socialism of the workers, of the masses, where the needs of the majority are supreme, not the profit and privilege of the few.

Today the forces of workers' communism are still weak, small, scattered. Last year the Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party decided there was a need for an initiative to provoke thought, discussion, and debate among these forces about the needs of the times. And so was born the January 1, 1990 editorial of *The Workers' Advocate* entitled "Tasks of workers' communism during the collapse of revisionism, a platform of struggle for the consideration of fighters against revisionism, revolutionary activists and class conscious workers around the world." It has received some interest

from activists of other countries, and it has also been useful for explaining the significance of the present period to the workers in this country.

The world is going through important changes. The collapse of the old revisionist order is not just producing oceans of hateful puss but is clearing away the old corruption. And economic evolution is transforming the technical side of production and emphasizing its social aspect on a scale larger than ever.

The revolutionary movement must purge itself of all the old revisionist, reformist, nationalist muck, of everything that doesn't conform to the needs of the class struggle and the truth, of everything that is holding back the emerging workers' communism. This will not be swift nor easy, and it will require the active collaboration of communist activists around the globe. But this work will pave the way for the new revolutionary movement that will raise the working class to its feet and allow humanity to tackle the immense problems facing the world. ■

VOICE

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They provide the opportunity to maintain the links of the progressive activists with the masses. These links cannot be maintained by hoping that some day the big reformist organizations, labor bureaucrats, pro-establishment leaders, and bourgeois feminists will advance the struggle. Rather let a spirit of contempt against reformism and class collaborationism develop among the activists and the working masses as a whole! It is the revolt of the working class and oppressed masses against their oppressors, and their dedication to building their own political trend to revolutionize the world and purge it of exploitation and corruption, that carries the seeds of future victories.

The voice of the workers and activists is smothered in the bourgeois papers. It is through writing, distributing, and studying its own leaflets and newspapers

that the working class develops its own press. This press, along with struggles and demonstrations, give the working class and progressive activists their voice. In the last period, *The Workers' Advocate* and the party press in general has been particularly important in maintaining a voice for class struggle. And they have provided a national and world context for local struggles.

The bourgeois campaign against socialism shows also the importance of the theoretical front of the class struggle. Without the spread of revolutionary theory among the masses, the mass movement cannot develop into a consistent, class-wide assault on the exploiters. It is vital that the party function as a center for work on the problems facing the revolutionary movement such as the nature of revisionism or the evaluation of how current world events bear on the theory of socialism. The Marxist-Leninist Party has devoted much attention to both

the experience of the mass upsurges of the past and the fight against the ideological offensive launched by the bourgeoisie around the collapse of revisionism. This concentrated work is essential to aid the theoretical initiative of the masses of workers, activists, and youth.

The building of the party in these days of a continued low level of mass struggle and revolutionary atmosphere requires patience and clear-sightedness. Exaggerating the immediate prospects, or belief in the reformist organizations are equally fatal. As well, while enthusiastically linking up with local struggles, party organizations must avoid overextending themselves, or developing their work one-sidedly. There must be a realistic assessment of the nature of each struggle, and its objective role, rather than being carried away with the belief that the extent of the struggle will be determined solely by the efforts of the Party. It is steadfast work to remain linked with the

masses and to take up necessary tasks facing the revolutionary movement that will prepare the best conditions for future upsurges.

Around the members of the Marxist-Leninist Party are sympathizers, activists, and workers. Some support the idea of building a party of workers' communism while others wish to work with it on some fronts of the class struggle. Without such circles no working class party could exist. All class conscious workers and activists should lend what support they can to the maintenance of communist organization. Arm-in-arm with these class conscious workers and activists, the Marxist-Leninist Party will maintain a revolutionary press, communist work in the mass movement, and the championing of the class struggle in all fields — economic, political and theoretical. ■

Women's rights....continued

'Pro-family' Bush disowns disabled children

The Bush administration loves to chatter about concern for "family values." Talk is cheap. The truth is that Bush is slashing the meager benefits for disadvantaged families.

Take what the Bush administration is doing to Social Security benefits to poor children with physical or mental disabilities.

One of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs under Social Security is supposed to help poor families with disabled children. Nine months ago, in February, the Supreme Court ruled that for 16 years the government had violated the law by arbitrarily restricting the definition of disability. It had been automatically excluding children

with Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, AIDS, cystic fibrosis, and other serious chronic illnesses and birth defects, thus denying benefits to hundreds of thousands of children. Despite the court ruling, not one of these children has yet gotten assistance. The Bush administration won't pay, and the legal system won't enforce a decision on behalf of the poor.

The situation faced by these families is desperate. This case involves only poor families. In most states, if they were covered by SSI, they would also be eligible for help from Medicaid with medical expenses. Cut off from both SSI and Medicaid, the families suffer. Even if they eventually get back payments, the

children may have suffered from years without proper medical attention.

Nevertheless Bush's officials have made it clear that they will do all they can to avoid helping the disabled kids. By May they had only got to the point of saying that they would have new regulations by August 31 to judge who is disabled. August 31 came and went, and the regulations are nowhere to be seen. Meanwhile, they are using an "interim standard" for new and pending cases. This standard specifies that those denied benefits would not have the right to appeal to an administrative law judge or the federal courts.

Why all the stonewalling? A White House official puts it this way: "Nobody in the administration wants to hurt poor and disabled children, but we don't want to give them a financial windfall either." (*New York Times*, Nov. 19) For the poor to have medical care is, in their eyes, a frill, a windfall. Even looking over the records is too much for Bush's officials. They say that they want to locate children eligible for benefits under the court system. But they refuse to simply pull up

the Social Security records of those who were unjustly denied assistance in the past, saying that this is "inordinately burdensome" and "extremely costly."

Oh yes, Bush is pro-family — but not your family, or workers' families, or poor families. He is pro-family — so long as it doesn't cost anything. ■

Justice for janitors

A janitors' strike was launched on October 31 against building cleaning companies in Washington, D.C. Some 6,000 people have jobs cleaning Washington's commercial office buildings.

For the last two years, the Justice for Janitors campaign has fought for union recognition, decent pay and job rights for janitors, many of whom are women and undocumented immigrants. In this latest action in Washington, D.C., workers and supporters have held rallies outside the struck buildings daily. ■

Step up the defense of women's rights!

Victory for clinic defenders in Detroit suburb

On November 10, about 100 pro-choice activists successfully defended a women's clinic in Waterford, Michigan from a blockade by some 150 Operation Rescue fanatics.

The pro-choice side had been expecting an OR action that day. Gathering early in the morning at the Summit clinic in Detroit, they awaited word on where OR would strike. When news arrived that OR's target was the Waterford clinic, about 25 miles north, they raced to the scene.

When they arrived, they found that OR had already solidly blockaded the front door. So the pro-choice forces concentrated on clearing OR from the back door and securing it for patients to enter. They managed to form a human corridor, shielding it off from OR forces on either side of the door. OR thugs tried to push their way through but were repulsed time and again. Slogans rang out against the holy bullies.

Everywhere that OR turned, pro-choice demonstrators faced off with them. In the parking lot at the back of

the clinic, activists shoved away anti-abortion fanatics who were heading to block the back door. In front, an OR picket was countered by a pro-choice picket.

In the midst of this, patients began to arrive. Pro-choice forces shielded them from harassment, and escorted three or four patients into the clinic.

Although the OR blockade was illegal, the Waterford police took about an hour to arrive in numbers. Even then, they allowed OR to continue their blockade of the front door. But in the back, where pro-choice forces had already been bringing in patients, the police took over the escorting. They then arrested several pro-choice activists for the "crime" of fending off OR blockaders. But with respect to the illegal attempt to close the clinic, they only made a few token arrests of OR blockaders.

The activists were correct to seize the initiative in defending the clinic and not rely on the police. As pro-choice militants chanted after their victory, "Who kept the clinic open? We did! We did!"

"Pro-life" leader praises mutilation of women

On October 8, anti-abortion leader Joseph Scheidler and a few dozen of his flock held a protest at the *Detroit News* building. They claimed that the media was biased against their movement. What the "pro-life" crusaders deem "fair" reporting is no more than parroting their anti-women prejudices. For example, they

regard the very use of the term "pro-choice" as evidence of bias, as is also use of the term "fetus," instead of "pre-born child." This is too much for the *Detroit News* to take seriously, even though it is located somewhere to the right of Attila the Hun on the political spectrum.

Scheidler and his troops were met and

denounced up and down by a group of 25 pro-choice militants. One activist ripped into Scheidler's "pro-life" hypocrisy, pointing out that denying abortion rights would lead to the mutilation of women in back-alley abortions. Scheidler replied, "That's good!" Taken aback, the

activist repeated that she had said that women would be mutilated, and again Scheidler replied, "Good!"

Scheidler's frank words cut through all the bull of the anti-abortion movement. They are not "pro-life" but "anti-women" and "pro-death."

A picket against OR chief Randall Terry

Forty pro-choice activists turned out on November 9 to picket Randall Terry, bully-in-chief of Operation Rescue, who was speaking at a church in the Detroit suburb of Southfield.

Operation Rescue is notorious for its blockades of women's health clinics and

harassment of women who use them. Pro-choice protesters marched around the church for about an hour and a half and shouted slogans non-stop at Terry and his ilk. They were bolstered by a number of new activists from Detroit and the university town of Ann Arbor.

"Pro-lifers" exposed as haters of humanity

The "pro-life" leaders don't care how much misery or death they cause so long as they can deny abortion rights. Recently Bush administration "pro-lifers" and anti-abortion groups temporarily blocked useful medical research because it involved the drug RU 486 which can also be used for abortion.

It turns out that RU 486 shows promise in the treatment of a number of widespread and serious problems, such as breast cancer and diabetes, to say nothing of hypertension and brain cancer. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, for example, has found that RU 486 is effective in treating Cushing's syndrome. Any real lovers of humanity would be overjoyed at this news.

But not the professional people-haters of the "pro-life" movement. All they care about is that RU 486 can be used for abortion. In France RU 486 is widely used. At present it appears that, when taken under medical supervision at an early stage of pregnancy, it is safe and effective. So the "pro-life" movement jumped in to sabotage medical research.

In mid-November federal scientists, who had been carrying on research for years with RU 486, announced it was being stopped. There had been just too much harassment, too much interference with supplies of RU 486. "Right-to-life" protests plus actions by the Bush government were responsible. For example, in June 1989 the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned importing the drug for personal use. It seems that this ruling was then used to harass

shipments of RU 486 for research purposes.

By vehemently opposing this medical research, anti-abortion groups excluded those who suffer from disease from the "right-to-life." Dr. Richard Glasgow, educational director of the National Right to Life Committee, said that these researches on RU 486 "are a blatant attempt to build a groundswell for an abortion drug and bring it into this country under the guise of a beneficial superdrug." (*New York Times*, Nov. 16) This stand by the "right-to-life" leaders has outraged even some of their followers and threatens to expose them as people-haters. So Dr. Glasgow also claimed that he really didn't have a position on this research — aside from opposing it, of course.

Well, there has been a groundswell, and it has forced the Bush administration to backtrack. In late November FDA officials told a House small business subcommittee on regulation that it was all a mistake. It was just an inadvertent accident that their June 1989 regulation had been used to stop researchers from getting RU 486. Sure. That's why it took them a year and a half to notice it.

Meanwhile the Bush administration continues to block any research into the use of RU 486 for abortion. They grudgingly accepted research for cancer patients. But not for those women seeking abortions. Oh horrors, abortion might become even safer. Why, those sinners should suffer and die — it's a useful object lesson for Sunday school. That's what the "right-to-lifers" think.

IN BRIEF

San Francisco activists have nothing to lose but their chains



Activists oppose "pro-life" chain in Bay Area

On October 7, over 200 pro-choice activists in San Francisco counterdemonstrated against a so-called "chain of life" organized by the anti-abortion rights crusade. The "life chain" participants lined 19th Avenue, south of Golden Gate Park. The pro-choice activists raised at a big intersection near the park.

The pro-choice forces got a lot of support from people passing by. In response to signs, passing motorists honked to show their support for abortion rights.

A contingent organized by the Marxist-Leninist Party helped explain what was going on to people in the area. For

instance, about 500 mini-pamphlets exposing the right-wing and pro-capitalist nature of the anti-abortion zealots were handed out to cars driving by and others.

Pro-choice movement vs. "life chain" Fremont, California

About 100 pro-choice demonstrators countered an anti-abortion "life chain" in Fremont, California on October 7. The sound of car horns blared as many passing motorists honked in support of those defending abortion rights.

Militant action rattles anti-abortion march

Eastern anti-abortion fanatics decided to hold a march from Mission Hill Church to an abortion clinic on October 6. Thirty-five showed up.

Pro-choice activists quickly swung into action. Fifty of them confronted the "pro-life" reactionaries at the church. "Pro-life, who are you kidding, you're pro-oil war and anti-women!" and other slogans stung the ears of the holy hypocrites at the church and as they began to march. Under this pro-choice fire, the anti-abortion marchers decided to disband their march and regroup at the clinic. Pro-choice protesters were there to greet them and hold a rally of their own.

Some representatives of the liberal women's organization, NOW, were present. But they did little more than passively observe for a while. Their disdainful attitude toward the pro-choice action fueled discussion on the role of NOW among the more militant protesters.

IRAQ Continued from page 6

Sheer opportunism

Many of the Trotskyist groups who cheer the Iraqi side proclaim it openly and loudly. But not all. Some shout it from the rooftops while others hide it. The Workers' World Party and the ISG, for example, while believing in it, think it wiser to keep it in the background.

Unfortunately, this silence doesn't spring from any noble aim, but only from sheer opportunism. If one really believes in an Iraqi victory as the key to progress, the honest — though not taken — thing to do is to advocate such a policy. But the WWP and ISG are much more interested in coalition politics with liberals like Ramsey Clark and others on the left wing of the Democratic Party. These liberal and reformist forces would shun them if they heard the slogan of "defend Iraq." So the WWP and ISG have to keep things quiet in order to cozy up to the liberal wing of the American bour-

geoisie.

We instead call on activists to help build a movement that will fight the bourgeoisie and imperialism. We put forward slogans against illusions in the UN and Congress and thus fight the harmful influence of the liberal bourgeoisie in the anti-war movement. We say, organize against the imperialist bourgeoisie in the U.S. and support the Middle Eastern toilers against their own exploiters and oppressive regimes. Don't defend the Iraqi regime — defend the Iraqi toilers.

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The savings & loan ripoff -- Where did the money go?

Where did the billions go in the S&L scandal? Well, let's take a look at the *Wall Street Journal*, which analyzed who got what in an article in November.

The *Wall Street Journal* is a major mouthpiece of the capitalist monopolies. And as such, it was interested to downplay the hundreds of billions ripped off by the capitalists. For example, it analyzes only \$200 billion of the estimated cost of cleaning up the S&Ls — leaving out, among other things, the interest cost for the bailout. Yet, most economists estimate a cost of up to \$500 billion before the bailout is finished. Nevertheless, even the minimized estimates by the *Journal* give quite a picture of the thoroughly corrupt system of capitalism.

\$20 billion to fraud

To begin with, the *Journal* claims that little money was lost to fraud. "In truth," the *Journal* argues, "crooks pocketed relatively small change." Of course the *Journal's* conception of "crooks" and "small change" is quite different than that of the workers. It narrows down "fraud" to solely a question of bribes and kickbacks. It then states that "only" \$10-20 billion, or at most 10% of the total scandal, went to fraud. This is a whopping sum itself. And, it appears, that not only bribes and kickbacks, but other fraud was involved in additional losses by the S&Ls.

But instead of fraud, the *Journal* declares, "Most of the money traveled over perfectly legal routes...Billions of dollars in excess interest payments were paid to lure money from the wealthy, and that money, in turn, was pumped out to fortune-seeking developers, deal makers and takeover artists." We will have to take a look at these "perfectly legal routes" and see how illegal activity mixed with legal.

\$63+ billion in extra high interest payments

Over 31% of the money lost went to extra high interest payments to wealthy financiers and brokerage houses. The *Journal* explains that many S&Ls were already in crisis by the early 1980's. To cover their losses, they brought in new deposits by offering extra-high interest payments.

Over \$20 billion of this sum came through large deposits brokered by Merrill Lynch and other Wall Street financial houses. In the bailout, the government initially tried to stop the S&Ls from taking the large brokered deposits. But, they still account for roughly 7% of total deposits in the S&Ls. And now, finding itself short of cash, the government has begun talking to Merrill Lynch about again feeding brokered deposits to the sickest S&Ls. Thus Wall Street financiers grabbed some \$63 billion, and are now grabbing more in the bailout, while the working people have to foot the bill.

\$40 billion to real estate tycoons

Another 20% of the total went to big land owners, developers, brokers, title companies and real estate lawyers. After deregulation, S&Ls turned to high risk investments, especially in southwestern real estate. Even as real estate values began plunging by 1984, many S&Ls kept up the speculation. But the prices crashed — in Texas they plummeted by 36%. The S&Ls could not get the repayment of the loans. And while the real estate tycoons drew handsome profits, the *Journal* complains that "much of it simply evaporated as real-estate prices

tanked."

\$15 billion to "bad business practices"

The *Journal* estimates another 7.5% of the bailout goes to "bad business practices" which more than doubled S&L operating expenses during the 1980's. This included the high living of the executives (from buying ski equipment to hiring special chefs), start-up costs for turning to real estate speculation, etc.

\$4 billion to "junk bonds"

The *Journal* also points out that the S&Ls went into "lending for the high-risk, high-yield bonds called 'junk' during the mid-1980's to finance leveraged buyouts and other takeovers. At peak thrifts invested \$15.1 billion in junk. That added to the funds available for takeovers and so helped raise the prices..."

But the *Journal's* estimate is probably too low. On November 14, the government filed claims for \$6.8 billion against Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. alone, saying the firm plundered more than 40 failed thrifts through junk bond and other securities dealings. The government

has charged Drexel with engaging in bribery, coercion, extortion, and fraud. Drexel has filed for bankruptcy.

\$15 billion to private contractors, bailout lawyers, etc.

Another 7.5% of the bailout goes to "administrative costs." The government is paying private contractors to run the S&Ls it has taken over. As well, the government's paying out as much as \$500 million a year just in legal fees. These and other administrative costs run up the total to \$10-15 billion.

\$13 billion to bailout ripoffs

6.5% of the cost goes to capitalists who have bought S&Ls in amazing deals from the government. The *Journal* attributes \$4-6 billion in excess money paid by the government to buyers of 196 S&Ls in 1988. For example, the *Journal* points out that "New York financier Ronald Perelman's holding company acquired five thrifts with \$315 million capital infusion, and walked away with \$1.7 billion in tax benefits. The Robert Bass Group contributed \$350 million in capi-

tal to buy what is now American Savings and got \$337 million in tax breaks." The *Journal* claims another \$7 billion is lost because capitalists simply refuse to buy the S&Ls except at rock-bottom prices.

Capitalism is itself criminal

The *Journal* also blames homeowners for \$25-30 billion of the losses, since the long-term mortgages made in the 1970's were at lower interest rates than in the 1980's. This is absurd. The *Journal* justifies the bankers' high living as perfectly legal and then complains about people borrowing money to buy a house, loans that the S&Ls were originally set up specifically to make.

What the *Journal's* analysis shows is that it was the big Wall Street financiers, the real estate tycoons, the S&L executives, and so forth who made a killing on the S&L crisis. And that now, the government bailout is making billions more for the big-time capitalists. That much of these billions is made "legally" only shows that the capitalist system itself is a criminal system, a system that legally enriches the already filthy rich by exploiting the working masses. ■

Mid-term elections: Hatred for politicians grows

The anti-incumbent mood dominated this year's national elections.

They were held amid the financial scandals that rocked Congress one after another. The politicians lined their pockets while the S&Ls collapsed, and they raised their own salaries while voting austerity for the people. The more Congress and the White House talk about solving problems, the less that is done. Bush won the presidency by promising that he wouldn't raise taxes — and he did. Congress blamed all cutbacks on the Bush administration, and then voted more cutbacks in social programs and more taxes on the poor.

Politicians are useless, politicians are corrupt, politicians don't give a damn except for their salaries and kickbacks and junkets. This was the feeling that spread.

Incumbents elected anyway

But when all the fuss was over, the anti-incumbent mood accomplished little in bringing in new faces. There were a few upsets — there always are — but most incumbent politicians continued to win new terms as always.

The media commentators pointed out that the feeling was that incumbents are bad in general, but our particular incumbent is a man or woman of the people. But there was more to it than this.

The anti-incumbent mood didn't deal too much with the role and programs of the parties of the rich, the Democrats and Republicans. It remained personal, so to speak, and hadn't developed to seeing the capitalist class interests that underlay the politicians, and how these class interests are reflected in the capitalist parties. There was cynicism about particular politicians being in the pocket of this or that capitalist or banker, like the notorious "Keating 5" group of senators. But this was not yet connected to a direct movement against the capitalist establishment.

The anti-incumbent mood didn't demand that candidates run on the platform of building up an independent movement of the working class. It hadn't reached the intensity of demanding this

yet, and so it hadn't split between different class forces, each upset with the politicians for its own reasons. The politicians might mind being thrown out of office, but the wealthy wouldn't necessarily mind having new faces to defend them. The real issue is not whether an incumbent or a new face is in Congress, but what class is building up its political movement.

So despite the anti-incumbent mood, the voters were receptive to the usual demagoguery about how this or that bourgeois candidate was OK. And even if they weren't, the opposing candidate was no dreamboat either. Is a new bourgeois politician any better than an incumbent one?

Term limitation bills

The anti-incumbent mood did succeed, however, in getting term limitation bills passed in the states of California and Colorado, and in Kansas City. These bills differ in their details, but set a maximum number of terms for politicians to stay in state or city positions. If they are not repealed, they will result in a change of faces in six or eight years or so.

This type of bill was a good reflection of the anti-incumbent feeling, because it directly implemented the idea of getting rid of incumbents (or at least forcing them to run for different offices). The experience of these bills will be something to watch.

But it is not likely to solve the problems facing the working masses.

One possibility is that they will result in strengthening the bourgeois parties and political machines at the expense of individual politicians who previously had built up little kingdoms for themselves. Since the politicians will have a relatively short time in office (although they can switch between different types of offices),

and will be relatively new before the people, the support of the parties, and their apparatus, may be more crucial. And the politicians will be dependent on the press and mass media, as solidly controlled by the rich as the parties, to get their new names in front of the voters.

In any case, simply replacing the incumbent every so often will not ensure that the new face is any less committed to the rich and powerful. Of course, his or her links to the rich and powerful may not be known and notorious yet, because of fewer years in office.

Build a working class party for socialism

But if this is the outcome of the bills, it won't necessarily be all for naught. It may provide useful experience to demonstrate to the masses that they must themselves build up a new political party, dedicated to their interests. The problem isn't just that Congress isn't "clean." A clean bourgeois politician who supports the bourgeois offensive against the people, the productivity drive, the increase in prisons and repression, etc. out of genuine belief, and not corrupt politicking, is no less dangerous than the wily old incumbent. If you are going to kick out the fatcat incumbent, it poses the question of ensuring a better replacement.

The only way for the workers to change things is to themselves build up their own party. This type of party cannot be primarily an electoral party, but first and foremost a party dedicated to building up the working class struggle. Only such a party can genuinely involve the masses of workers intimately, and not simply by casting a vote every couple of years. ■

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Bush rushes towards war

Continued from front page

international law, or the talk from Iraq about freeing Kuwait from its oil-rich monarch. This is a war between two capitalist robbers, the giant U.S. imperialism and the smaller Iraqi capitalists, over how the oil loot in the Persian Gulf is to be divided.

Iraq sought a greater share of the oil profits in the Persian Gulf and the U.S. isn't about to let that happen. Everyone knows that if Kuwait was rich in figs rather than oil, Bush wouldn't even have bothered to look up where Kuwait was on a map. No, this is a war to prop up undemocratic, medieval-style kingdoms like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who make money off oil. This is a war to make sure that U.S. imperialism remains the supreme arbiter of power politics in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region. In short, this war is for nothing more than the profits of the filthy rich oil billionaires.

Workers and youth of America are right to stand up and say no to this imperialist war. As for dealing with the

dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, that's a task before the Iraqi and other Arab people.

Exposed again: the UN is not an alternative

Ever since the Persian Gulf crisis began, it has been suggested by liberals who claimed to be critical of the U.S. war buildup that the alternative is a United Nations solution. This has influenced many of the anti-war demonstrations which have taken place.

Unfortunately the whole appeal was wrong from the outset.

If you agreed to think of the UN as an alternative, look where that leaves you today. The UN had endorsed the earlier military blockade and, while there could still be a compromise, the UN has put its stamp of approval on any war that may break out.

What has been the actual relationship between Bush and the UN on the Persian Gulf issue?

At bottom, the war drive in the Gulf has all along been a U.S.-led effort. True,

Bush has been successful in getting some other countries to send military forces and received the cover of several UN resolutions against Iraq. But don't forget that Bush first sent his huge armada in without waiting for any UN okay. And once again in early November, when there was some talk from various governments of a possible compromise with Iraq, it was Bush who upped the ante by sending in an additional 150,000 troops to add to the 200,000 already there. Again he didn't wait for any agreement from the UN. Both times, he's gotten the UN to go along after the fact.

Why is the UN agreeing to such a shameful role? Because this body is not some power above the world's governments but can only reflect the balance of powers that actually exists in the world. Britain and France have gone along because they are also imperialist powers like the U.S. which profit from the oil in the Gulf. The state-capitalist rulers of the Soviet Union and China have gone along because they are both desperate to win favors from Western imperialism. The smaller countries have been brought along by favors, promises, and threats because many of them are dependent on imperialism.

Keep up the protests against Bush's war!

While big-power politics is driving towards war, the working people cannot allow themselves to feel helpless.

Look at the anti-war protests and organizing that've emerged nationwide. Protest marches, teach-ins, refusals of soldiers to fight this war, leaflets and posters are spreading across the country, from big cities to small. Anti-war actions have also taken place in many other countries of the world — from Britain to Bangladesh to Australia.

The government and media can no longer ignore these developments as they did at the outset of the Gulf crisis. But they are working hard to sell this war to the masses; the attempt to corral public opinion for the war party continues. We must not let them get away with this.

The working people and youth must keep up the fire of anti-war actions. We must spread the truth about this war drive to even wider sections of the people, especially to workers, to communities of black and other minority peoples, to youth in the high schools, colleges and work places, and to soldiers in the military.

PROTESTS Continued from page 5

late teens and early 20's. As in the rest of the country, there was strong sentiment against the oil companies. The MLP contingent was a spirited part of the march. Among other slogans, they shouted *Down with Bush, Down with Hussein, No to a war for rich men's gain!*

The Los Angeles rally drew 400 people to Leimart Park. One big banner declared "Bring back the troops" and "Rich men start wars, poor people fight them."

Dissent in the military

When Bush visited U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia during Thanksgiving, the top brass ordered all troops to turn in their ammunition and remove bolts from guns. Why do you think they did that?

Because questioning of this war is very widespread in the military. Every official who's gone there has been asked, "When

are we going home?" Many have written letters to family and friends complaining about a war for oil. The military is trying to crack down on soldiers writing such embarrassing letters. One sergeant from Michigan was reprimanded for having his letters printed in his hometown newspaper.

A number of military men and women have refused to go to the Saudi front. One of the latest among them is army Sergeant George Morse from Grayling, Michigan. He is sitting in jail in Fort Riley, Kansas, facing a court martial. He was arrested because he disobeyed orders to prepare equipment for Saudi Arabia. While a few of these dissenters have been discharged, others like George Morse have been put in custody. The anti-war movement has supported the actions of refusers in the military, and it needs to find ways to link up with anti-war soldiers who stay inside the army. ■

Democrats' anti-war fraud

After Bush announced in early November that he was escalating the troop buildup in Saudi Arabia to over 400,000, liberals in Congress began to jump up and down. They struck a pose of being anti-war critics.

They shouted, "Congress hasn't been consulted." These were a chorus of voices from the newspaper editors and the politicians — Bush must make clear the aims of this war. And there were demands for a special session of Congress. The Pentagon's best friend in the Senate, Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), even called some hearings on the Gulf war buildup.

Does this place the Democrats in the anti-war camp? Should they now be invited to anti-war demonstrations? No

way.

The Democrats have backed Bush up on the main thrust of his war effort. They backed the original decision to intervene in the Gulf crisis and support the military blockade. But now some are getting nervous.

They are edgy that immediate war may not go smoothly. And they worry about the possibility of negative political consequences, internationally and at home. One thing that's very much on their minds is that an anti-war movement has sprung up with surprising success — given the early stage of this war buildup. They see the demonstrations coast to coast, they see the ferment on the campuses,

Continued on page 15
See DEMOCRATS

U.S. ally Israel keeps massacring Palestinians

The Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) has had a forceful revival, following the October 8 massacre of Palestinians by Israeli police in Jerusalem.

Government whitewash of massacre

In mid-November an official Israeli government commission handed in its report on the October 8 massacre. It followed the line the regime had been giving all along, of blaming the Palestinians for "forcing" police to shoot them. It says that Palestinians threw a barrage of rocks at Jewish worshippers, and security forces were "compelled" to fire to save the worshippers' lives.

But even leaving aside the question of the justice of shooting at youthful stone-throwers — the entire report is just one big lie. A hundred witnesses at the commission's hearing testified that the incident was actually initiated by the police, when it bombarded Palestinians outside Al-Aqsa Mosque (Dome of the Rock) with tear gas. The cops then began firing into the crowds of Palestinians. Videotapes of the incident show that scores of Palestinians had been shot, many of them fatally, before any stone-throwing began. And by then the police had cleared all of the Jewish worshippers out of the area.

Israeli police killed 20 Palestinians

outside Al-Aqsa. But the repression did not end there. They also fired on ambulances trying to save the wounded and teargassed the hospital where many of the wounded were taken. And the victims were literally hounded to their graves; troops or right-wing Israelis have attacked every funeral of the victims, attacking the grieving family and friends with gunfire and tear gas.

Upsurge in the intifada

The massacre prompted a new upsurge in the intifada. Palestinian youths confronted Israeli troops throughout the occupied territories, and hundreds of youth have been wounded. The upsurge has been fed by a number of additional Israeli atrocities.

In early November a young Palestinian activist, Atta Zaamin, died in a Gaza military prison. Zaamin had been savagely interrogated, and clearly died from torture. When news of his death came out, Palestinian youths took to the streets. Defying curfew, they set up blockades and bombarded Israeli patrols with rocks.

Also in early November, Israel launched a sudden invasion of Lebanon, driving 20 miles north of its so-called "buffer zone." This act again exposed the hypocrisy of the U.S. and its Western allies, who have formed a military coalition against Saddam Hussein for invading

Kuwait, but who didn't see any reason to condemn Israel for this latest aggression.

There were also some savage, racist attacks on Palestinians in Israel following the New York assassination of Israeli fascist chieftain Meir Kahane.

Israeli establishment memorializes fascist

Immediately after Kahane's death, an Israeli settler in the West Bank murdered two Palestinian laborers, apparently in revenge. And at Kahane's funeral in Jerusalem, 15,000 Israeli right-wingers marched through the streets chanting "Death to the Arabs!" They beat up a number of people and wrecked some shops.

The government dispatched troops to Kahane's funeral to hold the racist sentiment within some bounds. But at the same time the government couldn't resist paying homage to Kahane, who said aloud what many Israeli leaders only mutter behind closed doors — that the "Arab problem" must have a "final solution." The Israeli parliament observed a minute of silence in memory of Kahane (though only 30 members showed up).

So who was this man honored by the Israeli government? An American, Kahane had been an FBI informant. He had also been a front man for the CIA. He offered his services to the political

police, working against leftist activism in the 1960's. In 1968 he founded the Jewish Defense League in New York and launched a racist campaign against black people in Brooklyn. JDL patrols attacked black youths supposedly under the guise of "fighting crime." In 1969, under guidance from Yitzhak Shamir, Kahane shifted over to attacking Soviet diplomats and offices in the U.S. After being convicted for acts of terrorism, Kahane moved to Israel in the 1970's. There he founded the rabidly racist Kach party, which advocates driving Arabs out of Israel.

Kahane was killed by Egyptian-born El Sayyid Nosair, a man who reportedly knew first hand the jackboot of Zionist hatred in Israel. There can be no tears for Kahane, this apostle of fascist hatred. But it's not individual acts of revenge which will free the Palestinians from the oppression by Israeli zionism — that will require the development of the revolutionary movement of the masses. Forward with the Palestinian intifada! ■



The World in Struggle

French students fight cutbacks



French students use steel barriers in street fighting, Nov. 5

Public school students across France have been protesting cutbacks in education spending.

Strikes and demonstrations by students culminated in two massive marches in Paris on November 5 and 12. Each saw a turnout of 100,000. Most came from the city's working class suburbs. Students carried banners protesting money being spent on tanks and planes for the Persian Gulf instead of on education.

Both marches saw clashes with the police. The second however was even more viciously attacked. When the students arrived in the fashionable southern Paris neighborhood of Montparnasse, some smashed up fancy boutiques and stores. Police saw this as their opportunity to attack anyone they could lay their hands on. The face-off at the Pont d'Alma bridge lasted for nearly an hour.

At least 50 people were arrested and some 89 cops injured.

The same day there were other student rallies throughout the country.

The student protests began this fall in poor working class areas hard hit by government austerity. Students denounced the new budget proposed by Prime Minister Michel Rocard and demanded better facilities and more teachers. By late October, 25 schools in Paris were shut down by student strikes. Marches by students and teachers became frequent occurrences in Paris. The movement spread to other cities and towns and culminated in the huge November 12 march. At last report, the government had agreed to a number of new funding measures for the schools, which only satisfy part of the students' demands.

At the same time, some sections of

workers have gone into struggle to oppose Rocard's austerity plans. A one-day strike of transport workers shut down all bus, subway and suburban railways of

Paris Metro. Some scattered strikes were also called as a protest against Rocard's plan for a new tax on wages. ■

General strike hits Aquino's anti-worker policies

Urban and industrial commerce in the Philippines was shut down October 24 by a general strike. It crippled public transport in Manila and other cities. Factories, schools, colleges, stores, banks, hotels and major mining operations were also shut down.

The strike was called to protest falling wages. In September President Corazon Aquino ordered a raise in the minimum wage of 19%, but this didn't come close to keeping up with rising prices. The strikers demanded a pay raise of 42%, more than double what Aquino offered.

This may sound like a large demand, but it must be remembered that the minimum wage is only about \$3.50 a day to begin with. Also, it should be noted that the "minimum wage" is actually, in many places, the maximum wage; 55% of businesses in Metro Manila pay their workers less than the official minimum

wage.

The strikers faced fierce repression from the regime, Aquino deployed troops in Manila to intimidate the strikers, and 11 people were killed. Government workers were transported to their offices by army trucks. Following the strike, Aquino arrested a prominent union leader. And she passed new, stiffer measures against "rebellion." The sort of punishment Aquino never metes out to the right-wing army officers who rebel against her, she now promises to deal out to working class activists.

The strike also exposed, once again, the reactionary character of the TUCP trade union chieftains. TUCP is the trade union federation affiliated with the AFL-CIO and financed by the CIA. TUCP leaders broke ranks with other unions in the strike coalition and decided to accept Aquino's original offer. ■

Dominican Republic hit by general strike

Another general strike — the third in four months — was carried out in the Dominican Republic the third week of November.

Desperate to stop the strike, the Dominican government raided the homes and offices of strike leaders shortly before, and arrested many. But their efforts failed to cripple the strike. It shut down public transport, factories and most businesses for at least two days, Novem-

ber 19-20.

President Joaquín Balaguer's austerity policies have resulted in massive layoffs and shortages of food, medicine and electricity. Some areas have their electric power cut off for days at a time. The official unemployment rate is running at 35%. The general strike demanded Balaguer's resignation and an end to the austerity. ■

Polish election results surprise Solidarity

Poland has just finished the first stage of presidential elections. Prime Minister Mazowiecki was roundly rejected by the masses, finishing third. Lech Walesa had been expected to win a clear majority but he couldn't pull that off. He will have to face a runoff election against Stanislaw Tyminski, a political unknown from Canada who had joined the electoral fray as a long-shot candidate.

A year ago Mazowiecki, from the Solidarity leadership, had enjoyed enormous popularity as the first prime minister in decades not tied to the hated revisionist regime of false communists. Mazowiecki had been personally chosen for the job by Lech Walesa, who hung back from being prime minister himself. Apparently the Solidarity leaders wanted to keep Walesa in the wings, in case of trouble, to bring him forward as their strongest card later on. And Walesa had personal ambitions to replace Gen. Jaruzelski as president.

On January 1 the Solidarity leaders embarked on their "shock therapy" plan for converting Poland from a state-capitalist economy to a private-market capitalist system. The plan allowed prices to rise while holding wages constant. The resulting drop in living standards devastated workers, and the economy went into a depression. As another part of the plan, Mazowiecki began privatizing enterprises and laying off workers. Un-

employment shot up, from practically zero to over 5%.

Resentment against the "shock therapy" spread through the working class. With their position in the trade unions, the Solidarity leaders were able to prevent an outbreak of strikes. But they knew that the resentment was spreading fast and might break out in open struggle. So this summer the Solidarity leadership split into two. Walesa announced his break with Mazowiecki, and promised an alternative.

In running against Mazowiecki, Walesa talked a lot about "fighting the bureaucrats," and promised that his administration would give workers a lot of good things Mazowiecki has deprived them of. But these promises are just so much hot air.

The results of the election show that the appeal of the Solidarity movement is waning. This is shown by the fact that Mazowiecki got a drubbing. And this is also revealed by the fact that Walesa could not pull off the overwhelming vote he and his supporters expected. They were especially embarrassed that a large section were willing to give their votes to Tyminski, who wasn't from Solidarity and in fact is a complete outsider to Polish politics.

Unfortunately the Polish people have yet to find a progressive expression for their frustration and anger. Neither

Tyminski nor Walesa represent anything basically different from the Mazowiecki government. Both support the same program of rapid conversion into a private capitalist economy. In fact, Walesa is likely to continue the same finance minister as Mazowiecki's. And Tyminski, a leader of the Libertarian Party of Canada, also stands for unrestricted capitalism.

But working people in Poland are so desperate and confused that they were ready to believe in the demagogic promises held out by Walesa and Tyminski. Both lyingly claimed that their program of capitalist economy would make everyone a millionaire. Yeah, sure.

It is expected that Walesa may make a bid to become a dictatorial ruler. He wants to become a modern-day Pilsudski, who was a ruthless dictator in the period between the two world wars. Walesa makes no secret of his admiration for Pilsudski, and he has also made anti-Semitic declarations.

This is the disaster that free-market capitalism is bringing to Poland. Eventually, however, the Polish workers will find their way to a politics that is really in their class interests, a real alternative to both the old revisionist state-capitalism and the current, cutthroat free-market-ers. ■

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Bangladesh: The people defy emergency rule

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five-point platform of demands, which includes calls for democratic rights and a living wage.

Recently workers fought with police just outside Dhaka at the Adamjee Jute Mills, which has 100,000 workers. They protested vote fraud by the trade union bureaucrats against opposition candidates. Ershad's police were sent in to support the bureaucrats' goons. The cops also fired on a workers' march which was going to join an anti-government rally.

Economic conditions go from horrible to even worse

Fueling the popular discontent is the ever-worsening economic crisis. Unemployment is widespread in the cities and countryside. Many plants lie idle. Prices of necessities are beyond the reach of most people. Hunger spreads wider, and there are reports of suicides by the poor out of desperation.

In particular, Bangladesh is reeling from the impact of the Persian Gulf crisis. The increase in the world price of oil has been a staggering blow to the economy and the people.

The price of kerosene has soared. Many people use it for lamps and stoves. And bus fares have been increased, which means that they have gone up beyond the ability of most passengers to pay.

The Gulf crisis has also meant the return of huge numbers of laborers who had gone to work in Kuwait and Iraq. They stare at unemployment. The government, which received much foreign exchange out of their earnings, didn't lift a finger to provide them with any support on their return — not even transportation from the airport to the rail, bus and boat stations.

Ershad sends troops to join U.S. war

However the Bangladesh government saw no problem in sending several thousand troops to take part in the U.S.-led imperialist war buildup in Saudi Arabia. Why is Bangladesh — one of the poorest countries of the world and one that's being harshly penalized by the oil price hike — sending these troops? Because the Ershad regime is a client state of U.S. imperialism and the Saudi rulers. The U.S. and Saudis were eager to get anyone they could provide a Muslim cover for the imperialist war drive. So they pulled in their IOU's to Ershad's regime, which is heavily dependent on U.S. and Saudi aid.

Ershad's decision does not sit well among the Bengali people. Anti-imperialist protests in Dhaka have denounced the U.S. war buildup and Ershad's pro-U.S. stand. Islamic fundamentalist forces, meanwhile, have exposed their bankruptcy by coming out in favor of the U.S. war.

Working people need more than what the bourgeois opposition offers

Ershad declared the emergency as a desperate measure to block the rising momentum of the masses. Repression had failed to stop the protests, and workers had declared their intention of launching a "total strike" starting December 10.

The popular defiance of the emergency decree shows the resilience of the masses. They are determined to oust this tyranny.

At the same time, the opposition movement encompasses different political parties and groupings, reflecting the interests of different classes. There are two bourgeois opposition groupings, around the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. These forces merely see the mass movement as

a springboard for coming to power through new parliamentary elections. They want Ershad out, but only to replace his rule by bourgeois regimes under their control. In past struggles, they have even been willing to come to deals with Ershad and give up the mass struggle; this danger remains today.

But the workers, students and peasants aren't just fighting to reshuffle cabinet posts among the exploiters. There are also revolutionary forces fighting to develop the anti-Ershad movement towards establishing the power of the laboring people.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), in which communists are active, has been active in the current upsurge. They have worked to build the mass actions, to spread them widely among the people, and to encourage the formation of struggle committees among all the exploited. They have also warned the movement of the dangers of compromise-seeking maneuvers by the bourgeois opposition and encouraged the spirit of political independence from the bourgeoisie. And they have promoted anti-imperialist stands among the masses.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front has fanned the flames of class hostility by highlighting the class nature of the Ershad regime as the government of the rich exploiters.

For example, the RDF has hit hard at the way the regime has imposed the



Recent student rally in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

austerity measures resulting from high oil prices. They point out that while bus fares are raised hurting the poor and ordinary people, the regime did nothing to bother the rich who take frivolous drives in their cars. A token measure closing gas pumps on Friday is a joke, considering the rich simply line up Thursday evening to get their gas. The RDF also points out that while most stores have been ordered not to turn lights on after 8:00 p.m., the government didn't consider ordering lights off at nightclubs in the fancy hotels which are the playgrounds of the rich.

The participation of the workers and

other toilers in the struggle against Ershad has much to do with the movement's strength. The more the toilers are conscious of their class interests within the general movement the stronger will be its political clarity. This would strengthen the ability of the movement to win a decisive victory over tyranny as well as creating the best conditions for the working people to advance their struggle for class emancipation from the exploiters.

(Some of the information in this article comes from a recent issue of "Preparations," voice of the Revolutionary Democratic Front.)

U. of Michigan students: No to armed cops!



U. of M. students confront riot police outside administration building

The University of Michigan is trying to put a straitjacket on the student movement. Last spring it outlawed protest "shanties" in the guise of opposing "camping out." It also passed a Code of Non-Academic Conduct which bans unauthorized rallies, unapproved protest literature, and heckling and jeering of speakers on campus. And, following the arrest of five students who resisted the ban on shanties, the board of regents decided to arm the campus police force. The regents, ignoring the students' overwhelming referendum against deputizing campus security, claimed they were just interested in protecting female students

from rape. But, of course, it was campus security who manhandled female protesters in the fight over the shanties last June. The students didn't buy it.

Forty activists marched into the office of U of M President James Dunderstadt on November 14 demanding a meeting. When it did not materialize, they vowed to stay until the decision to arm the campus security is rescinded and the Code of Non-Academic-Conduct is lifted. Other students chalked scores of slogans over brick buildings, campus sidewalks and streets declaring, "NO CODE! NO COPS! NO GUNS!"

The next day, hundreds of students

rallied outside the occupied building. They defied helmeted police and chanted slogans supporting the occupation. Some students took over a second building. Meanwhile, scores of students rushed past the guards and up the stairs to the president's office. Several more students joined the occupation.

Then the Ann Arbor police marched in and arrested 16 students. But protesters surrounded the sheriff's bus. And the policemen who were bringing the arrested students to a side door fled. A police captain later explained that the police had fled to avoid injuries — to themselves no doubt. The 16 protesters were charged later.

That evening, 150 students marched to the university president's house. Ridiculing the university's "anti-camping" rule, many of the students spent the night on the lawn dubbed "Camp Dunderstadt."

The next day students marched through campus, gathering hundreds of supporters along the way. Eventually, 3,000 protesters rallied in a busy intersection for close to three hours. They blocked traffic, denounced the arrests, and pressed their other demands. A leaflet issued by a group of the student government declared, "As our government speeds towards the brink of war in the Gulf...their efforts at silencing students comes at a very precarious time. Given the university's own interests in U.S. foreign policy, there can be little doubt it will intensify its efforts to stifle students' voices of opposition in any way it can...the administration mustn't be allowed to have the guns on their side."

DEMOCRATS Continued from page 13

they know how workers are talking in the factories, and they are really upset with the signs of questioning and dissent in the military itself.

Thus the Democrats want to put a little space between themselves and Bush. They say, Bush hasn't made his war aims clear. That's garbage. The people are right to have sorted out that behind all the rhetoric about international law, this is a war for oil profits, a war to defend filthy rich kings and sheikhs.

The issue isn't to demand that Bush clarify his war aims, i.e. sell his war better to the people. The issue is to OPPOSE these imperialist aims.

And that's what the Democrats can't do. Because they too, like the Republicans, are a party of imperialism. The stand of even their most liberal section, Kennedy et al., is not that the U.S. should get the hell out of the Persian Gulf but that Bush's aims can be better served by a longer, drawn-out process — by letting the embargo against Iraq succeed. Thus while they quibble over going to war now, they leave open the option of going

to war later. In essence this is to demand that Bush wave the stick a bit more before using it. And to use the time to better win over the public.

The anti-war movement must not get caught in this trap. We must build a movement that isn't tied to the coattails of the smoothtalking liberals. That's the only way the anti-war struggle will have any serious push to it. Because if the Democrats and their supporters succeed, the anti-war movement will have to become an advisory council for the best method of imperialist intervention abroad.

DOWN WITH RACISM!

Anti-racist march in Portland, Oregon



"No Metzger, no KKK, no fascist USA!" rang out October 7 as 3,000 people marched through the streets of Portland, Oregon. They were protesting against attacks by racist skinheads and neo-nazis before the opening of the trial of "White Aryan Resistance" leader Tom Metzger. He and three other neo-nazis were charged in a civil suit with inciting the racist murder of an Ethiopian immigrant in Portland in 1988.

An especially militant section of the demonstration centered around SHARP (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), Anti-Racist Action, and the Marxist-Leninist Party. These three groups were in the same part of the march shouting slogans like "Hitler rose, Hitler fell, nazi scum, go to hell!" As the protesters entered downtown, more than 30 cops lined up beside this section of the demonstration and marched with it for several blocks to protect racist skinheads from the anti-racists. The protesters took up the slogan "Hey hey, ho ho, racist cops have got to go!"

The heavy police presence showed the city government's fear of the growing militancy in the movement. SHARP has gained a reputation for beating up racist skinheads and chasing them out of the

clubs and neighborhoods. And just two weeks before, youth protesting the appearance of Vice President Quayle fought the police with bottles and firecrackers, resulting in 51 arrests.

The worry over mass militancy was shared by the official civil rights "leaders." These liberals argued that the masses should be passive and put their faith in lawyers and Democratic Party politicians. Indeed, at the rally site one of the official march organizers denounced the leaflet of the Marxist-Leninist Party which declared "Smash the racist skinheads with militant action!" Such "inciting of violence," the speaker complained, could not be tolerated.

Later, when the jury fined Metzger and the other neo-nazis \$12.5 million, the "respectable" leaders considered this a vindication for their liberal course. But this verdict itself reflects the sharp sentiment against racism that has been built up by the mass struggles waged over the last period. As well, we will have to see whether this verdict holds up on appeal. It is essential to continue to build up a militant mass movement to fight the racism that's being encouraged not just by Metzger but also by President Bush down to the local police. ■

Protesters hit trial of racists

Two racists went to court in Detroit on November 9. They were part of a pack of whites who, shouting racist obscenities, attacked two black men with a baseball bat on August 31. But instead of carrying out the trial, the judge ruled to allow them another "preliminary examination" — indicating they want to drop all charges.

All along the government of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young has denied that racism was involved in this dirty attack. As well, the police arrested only two of the whole pack of racists involved in the beating. And now, it appears that the courts have opened the door to letting even these two racists off scot-free.

But about 15 anti-racist protesters showed up to demand that the racists be

brought to justice. Shouting, "Coleman Young are you blind? You cover up for racist crime!" and "Hey hey, ho ho, the racist system has got to go!" they marched in front of the court for half an hour and then went into the trial. They also distributed some 300 leaflets about the trial to passers-by, and virtually everyone in the court was reading them.

The protest was organized by the *Detroit Workers' Voice*, paper of the MLP-Detroit, and a network of people from the neighborhood around Harpo's Concert Theater, where the racist beating took place. People are angry that Mayor Young's government is trying to sweep this racist attack under the rug. They are talking about holding further protests. ■

Drug police pushing drugs

The central focus of Bush's "war on drugs" has been building up the police forces. But increasingly it comes out that the drug police are themselves making millions by pushing drugs and stealing drug money.

Take the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the federal government's top

drug police. Recently, two top DEA agents pleaded guilty to drug trafficking charges and another is now on trial. They were caught when convicted drug trafficker Mahlon Joseph Steward turned evidence against them. Steward, who had earlier become a DEA undercover agent to avoid a long prison term, recounted

how for three years he trafficked in cocaine and heroin that had been supplied to him by DEA agents. Some of the drugs had been stolen in 1984 from the DEA's evidence vault. As well, about 150 kilograms of cocaine was stolen from a drug hide-out in Pasadena in 1985. Steward admitted that he mailed the federal agents more than \$1 million in drug profits, some of it shipped directly to the DEA's Los Angeles headquarters in the World Trade Center. One of the agents is also charged with passing DEA intelligence information to fugitive drug dealers, helping them move money, and helping them avoid being caught.

Meanwhile, seven members of an elite narcotics investigation team of the Los Angeles County Sheriff are on trial for skimming \$1.4 million in drug money, evading taxes and various other charges. Several of the deputies on trial have admitted that, as part of their job, they sometimes worked with federal agencies on money-laundering cases that would actually send drug money back to drug cartels. And one officer claims that in 1986 he searched the Southern California home of a CIA agent who had ties to a

major drug-and-money laundering ring. In the search, he discovered numerous documents indicating that drug money was being used to purchase military equipment for Nicaraguan contras. But soon after, federal agents went to Sheriff Department headquarters and removed the recovered property, as well as records of the search and seizure.

Obviously, the government is up to its neck in drug-running, whether for the personal profit of some agents or for political reasons like propping up the CIA-backed reactionaries in Nicaragua.

But then what is the "war on drugs" about? Chiefly it is an attack on the working masses and a means to build up the police forces to terrorize the black and other minority communities. In the Los Angeles trial, a Sheriff's sergeant testified that the deputies savagely beat people who they claimed to be drug suspects and planted cocaine from their own evidence supply on them. The sergeant admits that he did nothing to stop the practice even as victims were wrongfully terrorized and jailed. ■

Detroit high school students protest "war on drugs"

The problem of drug abuse and violence among the masses is taking a heavy toll in Detroit. At the end of October, about 400 Finney High School students and supporters held a march to denounce these evils. But this does not mean they support the "war on drugs and crime" of President Bush and Mayor Coleman Young. Right at the front of the march was a placard decrying the "war on drugs" as a racist crusade against blacks.

The serious problem of drug abuse cannot be dealt with by simply arresting more young people and throwing away the key. But this is all that Bush and Mayor Young are up to. They are cutting back money for drug clinics, education, and jobs. And, instead, they throw all the funds into more jails, more police, and more secret police funds to buy Mayor Young bullet-proof limousines and hi-tech security at his mansion. Especially since the mass protests against the racist attacks outside Harpo's Concert Theater,

police have been all over that neighborhood stopping young people, doing I.D. checks and car searches. This is carried out in the name of a "war on drugs." But really it is a racist campaign against black people, a campaign to terrorize the neighborhood and prevent people from building up protests for their rights and a better livelihood.

At the base of the plague of drug abuse and crime is the impoverishment, racism, and hopelessness caused by the capitalist system. To put a stop to this plague we must build up a mass movement that can give the young people hope for the future — a movement of the working masses that fights racism, unemployment, and homelessness and for better education, decent paying jobs, health care, day care, and more.

(Taken from the November 23 "Detroit Workers' Voice," paper of the MLP-Detroit.) ■

High school students battle racist police in Bay Area

Six high school students were arrested and 20 injured as 500 students battled racist police in San Leandro, California on October 24.

A white cop singled out a black youth for the "crime" of following white students who had jaywalked outside the high school. Seeing their friend under arrest, students surrounded the cops and demanded to know why. The police responded with racist insults, telling the black youths: "All you n...s should go back to Oakland!" The crowd of students grew, including blacks, whites, Hispanics and Asians. Frightened, the cops called for reinforcements. Eventually over two dozen policemen showed up and began to use their clubs to beat, bloody and choke students.

City, school and police authorities, along with the local press, tried to cover up for the police. But the students wouldn't allow it. On October 26, hundreds of students boycotted the school. And together with parents, they held a

demonstration shouting "Stop police brutality now!" and "No police on campus!" and "We are one people!" They demanded a mass meeting to discuss police harassment, shouting "No meeting, no school!" until the principal finally agreed.

The meeting was attended by some 1,500 parents and students. (50% were white, 30% black, and 20% Hispanic and Asian.) It was marked by a broad-based anti-racist sentiment. City politicians, school and Justice Department officials, along with a hired "race consultant," tried to steer the meeting away from denunciations of the police. The NAACP jumped in to argue for "better relations with the police." But the masses were not satisfied. They put forward a series of demands such as: drop all criminal charges against students; bring criminal charges against the cops who did the beatings; hire more minority teachers. The officials agreed to establish a "task force" to investigate these issues. ■