

Down with Bush's "education strategy" No more school cutbacks!

Working parents have been worrying for years over the education of their children. The schools have seen one cutback after another. With the new round of state budget cutbacks, teachers are being dismissed, subjects are being cut from the curriculum, and the students have little to look forward to.

Big words to cover up more cutbacks

But in mid-April Bush rode to the rescue. Bush insists he is the "education president," and he set forth a "national education strategy." Bush's strategy, and an alternative Democratic educational "enrichment" bill in the Senate, are full of talk about all sorts of programs. Both talk of encouraging new types of schools. Both talk of new programs, overcoming the obstacles of poverty, social programs of one type or another, and promise the

skies and the moon. And the bigger the rhetoric, the less money is allocated.

The suggested amount of federal money to be provided for all these new and expanded programs combined ranges from half a billion (the Democratic plan in the Senate) to two-thirds of a billion (Bush's). Bush also talks of encouraging private funds. Even adding that in, the amount will be under \$1 billion, less than what is being allocated for the bailout of a single large savings and loan association, such as Silverado, ravaged by Bush's son Neil.

Moreover, the state education cutbacks this year far dwarf this amount. California alone will cut from one to three billion dollars from its education budget, several times what the federal bill will provide. Such cutbacks in California, as elsewhere, come after protracted austerity

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City U. of New York students fighting against cutbacks -- story on page 6

Bush plus Saddam spells disaster DEFEND THE KURDS!

Bush has sent nearly 10,000 troops to northern Iraq to set up camps for Kurdish refugees. Liberals are praising Bush for his compassion and humanity. The media are showing U.S. troops giving candy to children and providing aid to refugees. Why, you'd think that the Pentagon has become an organization of social workers, and that George Bush is the biggest humanitarian in the world today. Is the Nobel Peace Prize just around the corner for him?

What hypocrisy! What playacting! Some crates of food and medicine will not wash away the stain of the U.S. government's crimes against the people of Iraq, including the Kurdish people.

Bush and Saddam are both the butchers of Iraq

Many a time during the Persian Gulf crisis and war, Bush said that his beef was against Saddam, not the Iraqi people. And how has that turned out? Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime is very much in place in Iraq, while it is the Iraqi people who have suffered — both at the hands of Saddam's adventure in Kuwait and Bush's Operation "Desert Massacre."

As a result of the Pentagon's wanton bombing, a whole country's infrastructure stands devastated. Electricity, water supply, and sewage plants were attacked under the lie of destroying military targets. Hunger and epidemic are following in the wake of the ruin.

Some 100,000 Iraqi soldiers, mostly poor draftees in the Iraqi army, were the ones who got killed. Many were massacred in the Pentagon's celebrated "turkey shoot" as they tried to retreat in the final days of the ground war. Several thousand civilians were also killed by the U.S. bombing.

The Iraqi Kurds and Shiites took advantage of the Iraqi military's defeat to rise up in rebellion. Their grievances were quite just, and they did not need U.S. encouragement to rise. But the U.S. was not above playing a cynical game of power politics with the rebels. At first, there were hints of support, but when the rebels were winning, George Bush winked at their suppression by Saddam. He had concluded that Saddam was preferable to a rebel victory. Although Bush had

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See KURDS*

When will the recession end?

The economists are arguing over when the recession will end. And every day there's a new prediction. The figures for the first quarter of the year are in and they show the country in deeper crisis than at the end of last year. Still the Pollyannas of capitalism claim the worst is passing and that production will pick up next month, or maybe in the fall, or surely by the end of the year.

But the question that needs answering is when will the recession be over for the masses?

Nobody is saying unemployment will drop any time soon. A few decades ago 5% unemployment was called a depression but today it is called a boom.

Nobody is saying that wages will start to rise any time in the foreseeable future. Indeed, after accounting for inflation, weekly wages have been falling for 17 years and are now down nearly 20% from what they were in 1973.

And nobody is saying that the cutbacks are likely to stop quickly. Indeed, if the recession were to end tomorrow, some 28 states and over half the country's cities would still be facing budget deficits. And that's not to mention the huge federal deficit. Further cutbacks in social programs and rising taxes appear to be what's in store for the masses.

This recession is not only showing

Fightback vs. budget cuts

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how sick the economy really is. It is also revealing that the society is split up into classes — the workers and poor on the one side, the capitalists and rich on the other.

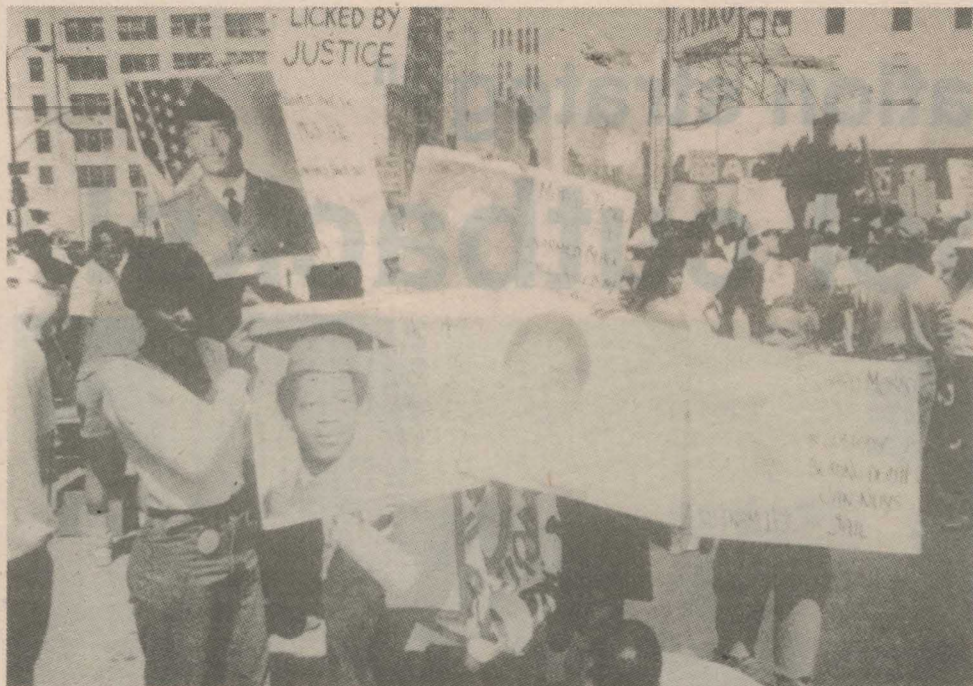
In the corporate board rooms and halls of Congress the debate on solving the crisis is kept within narrow confines. The bosses argue over how many plants to close and how many takebacks to grab to maintain a profit. The Republicans and Democrats debate how many welfare recipients to drive from the rolls to pay for education, or how many teachers to lay off to pay for health care, or how many hospitals to close to balance the budget. Oh yes, if the capitalists want a war for oil in the Middle East or to bail out the savings and loan corporations, well then the deficit doesn't matter, the costs are taken "off-budget." Either way, all that concerns them is — how to save the system, how to make the masses pay?

But outside the factories and state houses, in the pickets and protests that are starting to break out, a new cry is being heard — "Tax the rich! Make the capitalists pay for the crisis!" Here you find the factory workers, and the hospital employees, and the teachers, and the welfare recipients who, despite all their apparent differences, are starting to see they have something in common. Whether it is recession or recovery, boom or bust, they are all sinking. And how can they save themselves except by banding together and making common cause against the capitalists, against the rich, against the exploiters who prosper off the suffering of the masses.

When will the recession end for the masses? This can't be answered by the economists' charts and tables. It will only be settled by the class struggle. The sooner that is realized, the sooner individual grievances can be united into a class-wide battle. A battle that can actually defend the interests of the working masses, that can make the capitalists pay. ■

DOWN WITH RACISM!

5,000 L.A. protesters shout 'Gates must go!'



5,000 march against racist LAPD chief Gates, April 6

5,000 angry demonstrators marched on the Los Angeles police headquarters on April 6. Shouting "Gates must go!" and at times "They all must go!" the protesters displayed pictures of victims of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). And they told stories of countless racist murders and beatings at the hands of the cops. At one point a group of 100 demonstrators, shouting "No more Gates," marched up to confront about two dozen cops at the front door of the headquarters. After a tense moment the confrontation evaporated.

This was the largest yet of the weekly pickets at police headquarters since the cops were caught on video tape viciously beating Rodney King. Since April 6, protests have continued. On April 20, about 130 people picketed the headquarters. A number joined with MLP supporters to shout "Gates must go! The racist system must go! Capitalism must go!" The same day about 80 protesters rallied at a park in the black community in southwest Los Angeles. Another major march through downtown L.A. has been called for May 11.

The protesters' anger has centered on Police Chief Gates. He attempted to cover up the brutal beating of Rodney King and then to dismiss it as an "aberration." But the fact that about 33% of the L.A. police force have had formal complaints filed against them in the last

two years is an indication that this was no isolated incident. Gates, who has been defended by George Bush, runs one of the most brutal and racist police forces in the country.

The demonstrators are also denouncing the City Council which has been backing Gates to the hilt.

On April 4, after Democratic Mayor Bradley called for Gates to resign, the civilian Police Commission appointed by Bradley temporarily suspended the police chief. They made no charges, or even criticisms, of the police chief. They merely gave him a 60-day paid leave to allow time to calm down the anger of the masses. Mayor Bradley, who has never done a thing to stop the long-term racist police brutality, is now posturing in the hope he can quiet the masses without making basic changes in the police department.

But the next day the City Council, which is controlled by the Democratic Party, overruled the suspension by a 10 to 3 vote. And on April 8 he was reinstated by a judge pending a later hearing on the dispute between the Council and the Police Commission. Anti-racist activists were outraged by this move and have been pouring out their anger especially against the liberal Democrats who voted to reinstate Gates.

Unfortunately, the respectable black

leaders of the protest movement have not encouraged the anger with the Democrats into an independent movement. Instead, like Bradley, they promote getting rid of Gates as if that were a panacea to end racist police brutality. As one NAACP leader from the San Fernando Valley put it, "We are not opposed to police, only bad police officers...The unfortunate part of all this is that the LAPD, by and large, is a good police department." But isn't this exactly what Gates himself has been arguing? No, it's not just a few bad apples. The police are organized and trained as a force to suppress the minorities, and for that matter all the working masses, who are growing more restive against the growing unemployment, poverty, and homelessness.

At the same time, the respectable black leaders are trying to channel the mass protest into a tame election movement. Jesse Jackson, at the April 6 rally,

declared, "While we've got all this energy on Gates, suppose he leaves tomorrow, then what?...Next is elect city officials who respect you." Jackson and the other leaders are not really interested in building up a militant anti-racist movement, which alone can fight back against the police terror. Instead, they are using the mass anger to elect some more Democrats.

In Los Angeles we are seeing the Democratic Party game in action. One wing postures against racist police violence. But only to soften up the masses to vote for Democrats who, in their other wing, are openly and vehemently siding with the racist police. The truth is that the Democrats are a racist party of the capitalists, just like the Republicans. The more their influence is combated, the more the movement against the racist police will grow and become strong. ■

Teenagers denounce New Jersey police

75 black teenagers marched on the headquarters of Teaneck, New Jersey police on April 16. Frightened, police in riot helmets and with raised nightsticks were rushed to the front door. The youth denounced the racist cops. And the windshield of a police car was smashed

as the youth marched away.

This was the first anniversary since the police shot in the back and killed a black teen-ager, Phillip C. Panell. The night after that murder, rioting youth attacked the police station and threw rocks through windows of municipal buildings. ■

No to police torture in Chicago!

Shouting "L.A., Chicago, New York City, racist cops deserve no pity!" and "Daley and Burge must be purged!" 200 people rallied at the 9th District police station Chicago on April 27. Commander Jon Burge, notorious for using police torture against prisoners, now heads this station. The protesters then marched to the site of a recent racist gang attack and then on Mayor Daley's house.

In 1990 alone, 2,500 formal complaints against the police were filed in Chicago. Torture and brutality of blacks by the Chicago Police Department is well documented by Amnesty International, by

doctors and by the victims themselves. Police Commander Jon Burge and many others have been identified as using electroshock and "dry submarino" torture techniques against their victims.

But Chicago's Democratic Mayor Daley — confronted with evidence of torture as far back as 1982 when he was Cook County State's Attorney — has continually refused to investigate the atrocities. He has also commended Commander Burge and allowed him to rise to the rank of Commander of Detectives. ■

Why 'respectable' black leaders avoided anti-war protests

Although a large majority of the black people opposed the Persian Gulf war, most of the respectable black leaders avoided anti-war protests like Dracula avoids the cross. And the few who did come out wrapped themselves in yellow ribbons and talked more of "supporting our troops" than of opposing the U.S. war.

Have you ever wondered why? Well, some answers are not hard to find. It turns out that by cheering Bush on they put in their bid to grab lucrative contracts in the Kuwait reconstruction project.

This was made clear in a special appeal to Bush in April by John E. Jacob, president and chief executive of the National Urban League. He said, "The National Urban League was forthright in its support of the allied effort to roll back aggression. We knew the risks of casualties to our constituents in the armed forces were great, but we felt those risks were justified..." He continued, "Given the sacrifices minorities have made...it is only fair that special efforts

be made to reach out to include minority-owned and operated businesses in sharing the rewards of peace." (*Pittsburgh Courier*, April 13)

So, while unabashedly admitting support for Bush's bloody war for oil, Mr. Jacob also admits the black elite have been licking their chops in expectation of profits from the spoils of war.

Such is the nature of the respectable black leaders. They really represent the black elite, not the masses. They loyally stand with U.S. imperialism in order to get a piece of the action from the white ruling class. But more. Jacob admits that they have no qualms about sacrificing the lives and limbs of the black working people, who populate the military. They are quite willing to trade blood for profit. ■

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Strikes and workplace news

Washington teachers strike for better schools

On April 18, more than 21,000 school teachers in the state of Washington went on strike to demand that the state legislature provide more money for quality schools.

The strike has closed schools in Seattle, Tacoma and other urban and rural schools west of the Cascades. Every day since the strike began, thousands of teachers have picketed the state capitol to press the lawmakers to act.

Governor Booth Gardner and the legislative leaders cry that there is no more money for education and that any increase must come from higher property taxes or cuts in social services. The teachers are not buying this lie. For years, the state has granted corporations major tax breaks. For example, Boeing aircraft, which reaps billions in profits,

is exempt from paying sales taxes whereas citizens in Washington must pay a 7% sales tax.

A recent study by the research group Citizens for Tax Justice found that the poorest 20% of Washington residents pay 17.4% of their income in taxes and the middle 20% pay 9.5%. But the richest 1% pay only 3.4%. This gap between what the rich and poor pay is bigger than in any other state in the USA. The teachers are demanding that the rich and the corporations pay their fair share.

The teachers were forced to take action after many years of chronic state underfunding of education. The teachers are fed up with overcrowded classrooms, deteriorating school buildings, inadequate supplies, outdated textbooks, and non-competitive salaries. ■

Railway strike ended by Congress

Working with lightening speed, Congress ordered an end to the national railway strike just 18 hours after it had started. In the early morning hours of April 18, Democrats and Republicans joined hands to enact the back-to-work measure. President Bush was awakened to sign it, and 235,000 rail workers were forced to end their strike action.

The rail company executives did not immediately get everything they wanted. They had asked Congress to impose a contract based upon the findings of the Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) — a report which would have cut wages and benefits and gutted work rules. However, the congressional measure sets up a new emergency board of three people (one

from the previous PEB and two others handpicked by Bush) to examine the issues. At the end of 65 days, if no agreement between the sides has been reached, the board will impose its own settlement. There is little chance it will be better than the last one.

The railway workers have the potential power to bring the country's economy to a grinding halt. But this would require defying Congress and carrying out an illegal strike. The union leaders, long housebroken from hob-nobbing with the rich, would never consider it. And so the workers are left to suffer the dictates of a congressional board that is virtually in the hip pocket of the railway capitalists. ■

Pittsburgh grocery workers strike

More than 6,000 workers struck 31 Giant Eagle grocery stores in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on April 22. The workers are demanding increased wages, improved benefits, and job security.

Over half of the Giant Eagle workers make only \$4.30 an hour. Only 40% of them receive any benefits at all, and only 20% have health benefits. The company has been hiring most of its workers on a part-time basis so as to avoid having to pay benefits guaranteed full-time workers.

The food chain has a virtual monopoly in the city of Pittsburgh. The company reported profits of over \$1 billion in 1990 alone. However, it refused to restore past takebacks from the workers and demanded more. The company is also well known for closing down stores and then reopening them a few weeks later as nonunion "independently owned" franchises. There are 43 such stores operated by franchise owners. It appears the company now wants to smash the union altogether.

Full-page ads have been run in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette for replacement workers. Apparently these large ads must have been prepared while Giant Eagle was supposedly "bargaining" with the workers. The company never had any intention of negotiating a settlement. But the strikers are getting support

from workers throughout the city. The company has been forced to cut some store hours and is starting to hunt for business. ■

Injured postal workers protest at workers' comp office

The Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) in Cleveland, Ohio received a big surprise March 11 when two carloads of postal workers from Detroit walked in and demanded some action on their cases.

Extreme financial difficulties and loss of work time are resulting from the runaround that workers get from both the government office and the Postal Service's Injury Compensation office. So the IHPWU (Injured and Handicapped Postal Workers United) organized the

caravan.

Big advances were made in some compensation cases because of the trip: OWCP routinely delays ruling on workers' cases, not even following its own deadlines. And their telephone number connects you to a computer. So you are left with the tedious procedure of resolving your case by mail.

IHPWU is planning more such trips. (Taken from April 1 "Bulletin" of the IHPWU.) ■

New York City building workers strike

Over 30,000 building workers struck 4,000 apartment buildings in New York City and part of Long Island on April 21. Picket lines were immediately set up at rental, co-op and condominium buildings by doormen, porters, elevator operators and concierges.

The building owners are represented by the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations (RAB). It is demanding 29 separate givebacks from the workers. Among other things, it wants to force workers to pay part of their health care benefits, change some full-time workers

to part-time, cut wages, and not allow workers to take consecutive days off.

On April 24, independent settlements were reached at more than 100 buildings. But the RAB refuses to restart negotiations with the remaining strikers, so the struggle continues.

Members of several unions and many tenants have expressed solidarity with the striking building workers. City sanitation workers and United Parcel Service workers have said they will not cross the strikers' picket lines. ■

Montana state workers strike

More than 4,000 Montana state employees went on strike April 25 after the state legislature failed to override the governor's veto of a pay increase. In the

capital, Helena, strikers picketed outside a state office building. The National Guard has been called in to maintain essential services. ■

Auto workers protest Van Nuys plant closing

Workers at the GM assembly plant in Van Nuys, California are angry. For years GM has threatened to close the plant in order to blackmail concessions out of the workers. But despite concessions, GM never would guarantee the plant would be kept open. Now it looks to be on the road to closing.

On March 28, second shift was eliminated from the plant. GM has not announced how long first shift will continue to work. Demanding "Keep GM Van Nuys Open," more than 30 auto workers rallied the last day of second shift to protest the gradual closing of the plant. ■

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Tragic results of Gulf war fuel protests

Every day events show the dirty nature of the Gulf War. One day it is revelations concerning the arrest, torture, and killings of Palestinians, Kurds, and others in "liberated" Kuwait. And the next it is U.S. imperialism's tacit OK to Hussein to suppress the angry Iraqi people. These events show that Bush's war was not for freedom, nor was it a war of liberation. It was simply a war to ensure imperialism's preferred division of the oil profits and the proper relations between master and client in the U.S. empire.

In April, a number of protests against the war continued: Throughout the month GI dissenters had to stand up against courts martial and other persecution by the Pentagon. (See other articles.) As well, on April 6 small protests took place at a number of cities around the country.

Other actions also took place. Notable was a Chicago rally on April 25 that defended the Kurdish struggle. The Kurdish issue has dominated recent news on the aftermath of the war, and it is vital that anti-war activists put forward their own perspective and support the rebellious people of the Persian Gulf, such as the Kurdish movement. Opposition to the war does not require skepticism towards the rebellions against Hussein. The activists should back the people suffering from both U.S. devastation and Hussein's tyranny. Fifty people showed up to demand self-determination for the Kurds. Over half also marched on State Street, shouting "Bush, Hussein, you should know, we support your overthrow!" and "U.S. imperialism, get out of the Middle East!"

Since the end of the ground war, the

movement has dropped dramatically in size. But the experience of this struggle hasn't evaporated. Many people entered the protest movement during the war. They are pondering why the war ended as it did and what this shows about finding a solid basis to oppose U.S. empire-building.

The course of the war brought forward many lessons about the nature of the system. Particularly hated, for example, was the capitalist press, which showed that it does not stand for truth or objective reporting, but for bootlicking service to the powers-that-be. As well, the UN, Congress, and the Democratic Party also showed themselves to be no alternative to war, but instruments of imperialism. But still the apologists of the Democratic Party would have us believe that they came within a few votes of having Congress block the war. The "support our troops" slogan was shown

to be a trap and a snare. Yet still the liberal wing of the movement would bring it forward, in a futile search to avoid confrontation by pacifying the militarists with a show of softness and supposed common concerns. And the very role of militant struggle has been debated, with the worshippers of the politicians hot and bothered by the desire of the masses for action against the war.

The new wave of protesters is not going to disappear. In a number of circles, there is talk of staying in action by going into other movements and taking up other issues. And the difference between militant struggle and faith in the establishment, the difference between confronting the oppressors and faith in appeals to the smiling, two-faced politicians of exploitation, will continue to develop. The war has brought not only devastation and misery, it has woken up many to the need for struggle. ■

Support our GI resisters!

The U.S. bloodbath in the Gulf gave rise to numerous acts of anti-war resistance within the ranks of the ordinary soldiers. A number of GIs refused orders to be shipped to the Middle East, spoke out against the war, or became active participants in anti-war demonstrations. Thousands of others applied for conscientious objector status or other forms of discharge from the military.

Today, while the Pentagon has parades and medals for massacring fleeing Iraqi troops and bombing defenseless civilians, they are persecuting brave GI war resisters with a vengeance. This has further exploded the fraud that pro-war and anti-war forces could be united under the same banner of "support our troops." Some liberal politicians attempted to suck ordinary people into the yellow ribbon campaign with the claim that one should "support the troops" no matter what one thought about the war. But has the yellow ribbon crowd rushed in to

provide comfort and support for the troops who opposed the war? Have they paraded them, organized letter writing campaigns to uphold their morale while they are in the military brigs and stockades, and opposed their courts-martial? Of course not.

No, the warmongers have never supported the rank-and-file soldiers without first distinguishing what stand they had towards the war. For the capitalist rulers, the armed forces are merely their whip to keep the world safe for plunder and profit. They want the soldiers to be mere killing machines to defend Big Oil in the Gulf. It was the fight against the war that truly represented the interests of the sons and daughters of the working people caught in the army. One could not help the rank-and-file soldier without taking a stand against this war of aggression. Let us step up the fight in defense of the GI resisters who risked military "justice" to do the right thing. ■

Heavy sentences fail to quash GI resistance

With the massacre of Iraqis over, the U.S. military is unleashing its wrath on the soldiers and sailors who refused to be used as killing machines for Bush's "new world order." Dozens have already been sentenced, and many more face courts-martial. At Camp Pendleton alone, a Marine base in California, about 100 GI resisters have been thrown in the brig awaiting trial.

Among the anti-war GI's is Tahan Jones. Jones, a black Marine reservist, applied for conscientious objector status in October 1990 and went AWOL rather than be shipped to Saudi Arabia. He has been a vocal critic of the war, and denounced the hypocrisy of forcing blacks to risk death for a country that subjected them to discrimination.

Jones also denounced the racism of the Marine investigators who dealt with his request for CO status. The captain who interviewed Jones wrote that Jones was "incapable of articulating any discernible thought" on his anti-war views and must have got "coaching" in order to write his request for CO status. Jones sees this assessment as a racial stereotype. It can be noted that Jones has articulated his views quite clearly at anti-war actions.

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The military has even gone after GI spouses. One case involves an anti-war woman, Annette C., living with her GI husband in Germany. After her husband was stationed in the Gulf, military police searched her apartment and threatened to expel her from Germany for her views and make trouble for her husband.

The military brass is trying to stifle the GI resistance. In so doing, it is further revealing itself that the new volunteer army that devastated Iraq is just as brutal and oppressive towards any rank-and-file soldier with honor or an independent mind as the old conscript army that devastated Vietnam. ■



1,500 demonstrated against war and racism in San Francisco, April 6

Navy trumps up charges against two anti-war sailors

At the end of March, the Navy ordered the court-martial of Abdul H. Shaheed and James Moss, two sailors who opposed the Gulf war. Moss had applied for conscientious objector status, and Shaheed has stated he wanted a peaceful solution to the conflict. They are now being accused of "urging disloyalty, mutiny or refusal for duty" with respect to sabotage and a prospective kidnaping of the captain of the *U.S.S. Ranger* while the two were serving aboard this aircraft carrier during the war. These charges could bring sentences of up to ten years.

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sations are just a ruse to go after Shaheed and Moss because they hated the war. The Navy has admitted that "there was no overt act involved, no destruction of any equipment," so the basic issue is that the sailors made statements the Navy didn't like.

Meanwhile, the sailors, both of whom are black and Muslim, contend they are victims of hysteria against their religion. Indeed, the Navy's charges reek of bigotry. According to the Navy, the two sailors were supposedly inspired by Saddam Hussein's call for a "holy war" against the U.S. If the Navy has to rely on linking the sailors with Hussein on the basis of religious affiliation, this not only shows bigotry but that the Navy must not have much real evidence. ■

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And after the Iraqi counteroffensive created a flight of refugees, the U.S. would not even consider providing relief aid to them. As Kissinger is reported to have told Congress, "covert action should not be confused with missionary work."

Backing Saddam in 1988 during his poison-gas attacks

In the early 1980's, during his war with Iran, Saddam Hussein had promised the Iraqi Kurds some measure of autonomy. But he tore up that promise, and the Kurds organized a widespread guerrilla struggle. Saddam's answer was a scorched-earth policy of destroying whole

Kurdish villages and towns. In 1988, he used poison gas on Kurds, killing thousands in Halabja.

And what did the U.S. government do? It would not even condemn Saddam Hussein's crime. It pleaded ignorance. And why? Because Washington was backing Saddam Hussein in his war with Iran. Of course later, during the recent war, it would "remember" Saddam's poison-gas crimes, but then it suited its war propaganda!

These are just some of the worst crimes of imperialism against the Kurds. There is much more, including support for the Shah's oppression against Iranian Kurds and the ongoing backing of the Turkish regime, which is one of the worst oppressors of the Kurds.

Shame on imperialism for this long history of oppression and betrayal! ■

Tragic results of Gulf war fuel protests

Every day events show the dirty nature of the Gulf War. One day it is revelations concerning the arrest, torture, and killings of Palestinians, Kurds, and others in "liberated" Kuwait. And the next it is U.S. imperialism's tacit OK to Hussein to suppress the angry Iraqi people. These events show that Bush's war was not for freedom, nor was it a war of liberation. It was simply a war to ensure imperialism's preferred division of the oil profits and the proper relations between master and client in the U.S. empire.

In April, a number of protests against the war continued: Throughout the month GI dissenters had to stand up against courts martial and other persecution by the Pentagon. (See other articles.) As well, on April 6 small protests took place at a number of cities around the country.

Other actions also took place. Notable was a Chicago rally on April 25 that defended the Kurdish struggle. The Kurdish issue has dominated recent news on the aftermath of the war, and it is vital that anti-war activists put forward their own perspective and support the rebellious people of the Persian Gulf, such as the Kurdish movement. Opposition to the war does not require skepticism towards the rebellions against Hussein. The activists should back the people suffering from both U.S. devastation and Hussein's tyranny. Fifty people showed up to demand self-determination for the Kurds. Over half also marched on State Street, shouting "Bush, Hussein, you should know, we support your overthrow!" and "U.S. imperialism, get out of the Middle East!"

Since the end of the ground war, the

movement has dropped dramatically in size. But the experience of this struggle hasn't evaporated. Many people entered the protest movement during the war. They are pondering why the war ended as it did and what this shows about finding a solid basis to oppose U.S. empire-building.

The course of the war brought forward many lessons about the nature of the system. Particularly hated, for example, was the capitalist press, which showed that it does not stand for truth or objective reporting, but for bootlicking service to the powers-that-be. As well, the UN, Congress, and the Democratic Party also showed themselves to be no alternative to war, but instruments of imperialism. But still the apologists of the Democratic Party would have us believe that they came within a few votes of having Congress block the war. The "support our troops" slogan was shown

to be a trap and a snare. Yet still the liberal wing of the movement would bring it forward, in a futile search to avoid confrontation by pacifying the militarists with a show of softness and supposed common concerns. And the very role of militant struggle has been debated, with the worshippers of the politicians hot and bothered by the desire of the masses for action against the war.

The new wave of protesters is not going to disappear. In a number of circles, there is talk of staying in action by going into other movements and taking up other issues. And the difference between militant struggle and faith in the establishment, the difference between confronting the oppressors and faith in appeals to the smiling, two-faced politicians of exploitation, will continue to develop. The war has brought not only devastation and misery, it has woken up many to the need for struggle. ■

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What's ahead for Iraqi Kurds?

The Iraqi Kurds waged a valiant struggle against Saddam Hussein's military machine. For a few brief weeks, they had a taste of freedom. But in the end, they were not able to stand up to Saddam's counter-assault. Saddam was also helped to some extent by the U.S. government, which had concluded that his continued rule was preferable to victory by the armed rebellion. Over a million Kurds fled their homes fearing the terror of the Iraqi military. The conditions of the refugees are miserable.

At the end of April, leaders of the Kurdish resistance in Iraq arrived at an agreement with Saddam Hussein. They had been asked to go to Baghdad for talks. It is not yet clear what the agreement will fully amount to. But it appears to promise some type of autonomy for the Kurds in exchange for an end to the armed resistance. The agreement could open the way to the return of the refugees back to their homes.

The details of the agreement are still to be worked out, but it appears it was a compromise between two forces who are both in a difficult position.

The Kurdish resistance was not able to defeat Saddam's military. They had won some spectacular victories briefly but it was not enough to stave off the Iraqi forces. A large part of the Kurdish population was uprooted from their homes as the rebellion was defeated. It was not that promising to have millions of their people languishing in refugee camps, behind barbed wire patrolled by foreign soldiers.

Meanwhile, Saddam appears to also be interested in a compromise. Despite his military victory against the Kurds, all he could look forward to was another dragged-out insurgency in Kurdistan. And the refugee crisis allowed the U.S. a pretext to occupy a whole section of northern Iraq. Meanwhile, he is desperate to have the economic sanctions lifted, so that oil can be exported again for Iraq's devastated economy.

The agreement is thus the result of two forces who could not fully defeat each other. Given that their backs were against the wall, it is understandable that the Kurdish resistance had to make a deal.

But a truce in the struggle is one

thing. It would be quite another to fall for the illusion that Saddam will keep his promise of autonomy for the Kurds. Once the situation is stabilized, the Kurds cannot expect any agreement to last.

The Ba'ath regime has made promises before, only to betray them later. And the Kurdish people have paid a bitter price for their leaders putting too much store in Baghdad's promises. Thus many Kurds are right to question why, even if they had to make a difficult deal, the leaders like Jalal Talabani had to go on and embrace Saddam Hussein.

History has shown many times over that Kurdish rights will not come through the goodwill of any of the capitalist leaders of Turkey, Iraq or Iran. Nor will it come from hopes in U.S. and Western imperialism (see adjoining article).

Jalal Talabani and his fellow Kurdish leaders in Iraq may fall for illusions in Baghdad, just as some of them hoped for help from Bush, because they are based on certain classes — the Kurdish bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The leaders from this strata have led various rounds of struggle, but they repeatedly fall for the idea that Kurdish rights will come through the goodwill of this or that established power.

This perspective is not the path for freedom for the Kurdish people. The vast majority of the Kurds are toilers: peasants and workers. They provide the backbone of the courageous *peshmargas*. They need a revolutionary policy that will not only win Kurdish national rights but also bring them out of capitalist and landlord oppression. The leaders of the Kurdish resistance like Talabani or Barzani may fight for national rights, but they do not want the liberation of the toilers.

The liberation of the Kurdish toilers will come only through a policy which is linked to the fate of the rest of the toilers in the countries in which they are fighting. Revolutionary Iran of 1978-79 is a case in point. There the Iranian Kurds won a springtime of freedom as they rose in revolution against the Shah, alongside the rest of the Iranian people. They were not able to preserve their gains in the face of Khomeini's on-



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slaught, but Iranian Kurdish revolutionaries did build up ties with communist workers across Iran. The Kurdish organization Komala, who represented the toilers of Iranian Kurdistan, joined together with other Iranian communists to build the Communist Party of Iran. Through the harsh years of reaction in the 1980's, they have assisted communist workers in the underground throughout Iran to build up a movement against the Islamic Republic. This work has plough-

ed the ground for another revolutionary upheaval in Iran, and if the toilers can bring such a revolution about, that would be the best guarantee of liberation for the toilers and people of Iranian Kurdistan.

It is the same road which could open the way to Kurdish liberation in Turkey and Iraq. The fate of Kurdish rights is inextricably linked to development of the toilers' struggle in all these countries. ■

Imperialism — no friend of Kurdish freedom

The defeated Kurdish rebellion in Iraq today is just the latest tragedy for the Kurdish people.

The Kurds are a distinct nationality of people, some 20 million in number, who are split up across several states: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union. Most of them live in Turkey, Iraq and Iran, where they face harsh national oppression. In Turkey, they are not even allowed to call themselves Kurds. In Iraq, they have repeatedly faced Saddam Hussein's genocidal assaults. And in Iran, the Islamic Republic has taken away the rights the Kurds won there after rising in rebellion against the Shah.

In all these countries, Kurds have been fighting for their right of self-determination. They have demanded autonomy within the borders of the states they live in, but the reply of the governments has been terror and martial law. Still, the Kurds have persisted with their courageous struggle, through many rounds of torture and massacres.

Their fight for liberation goes back many decades. The struggle has been shouldered by ordinary toilers, but, with a few notable exceptions, their leadership has been in the hands of bourgeois and landlords. These leaders have repeatedly fallen for promises of help by world imperialism or this or that big power — only to be cynically and cruelly betrayed in a short time.

George Bush's latest cynical playing with the Kurds is part of a long and shameful history by Western imperialism. It brings home the lesson once again, written in rivers of blood, that the fight for Kurdish freedom cannot be based on aid from imperialism.

British imperialism bombed the Kurds

Before World War I, much of Kurdistan was part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. Turkey was on the losing side in that imperialist war, and after the war, when imperialism was carving up the Ottoman Empire, Britain and the U.S. made the Kurds of Iraq the promise of a national state.

But Mosul province, which was Kurdish, was rich in oil. And the British were not about to give up control of this

province, even to an independent Kurdish state which they might have dominated. So they kept it attached to Iraq which was under their control. The Kurds of Mosul, along with other people in Iraq, did not like the British colonial presence; so they rose in armed rebellion.

The answer of the British government was to bomb the Kurds, with explosives and mustard gas. They destroyed whole villages.

A brief taste of freedom at the end of World War II

In 1946, the Kurds in Iran established the Mahabad Democratic Republic. But this could not last long. Britain and the U.S., who were busy propping up the Shah's despotic regime in oil-rich Iran, demanded its dissolution. The Soviet leadership, which had given the Kurdish republic some support, complied in order to make peace with Western imperialism. The Shah's army put down the Kurds. The Kurdish people had again been sold out.

Nixon and Kissinger double deal with the Kurds

In 1973, Nixon and Kissinger had the CIA, via the Shah of Iran, provide some covert aid to rebellious Iraqi Kurds. The U.S. and the Shah wanted to put pressure on the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. When the Iraqi government granted the Shah's border claims in 1975, the Kurds were dumped. Before the ink was dry on that deal, the Iraqi regime went in to massacre the Kurds.

Even before this betrayal, the U.S. government had never intended to help the Kurds wage any type of winning battle. The 1976 Pike Commission in Congress found that "Documents ... clearly show that the President, Dr. Kissinger and the foreign head of state [the Shah] hoped that our clients [the Kurds] would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's [Iran] neighboring country [Iraq]. This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to continue fighting." (The

Continued on page 4
See IMPERIALISM

Loyola University students denounce tuition hikes

Loyola University students rallied against tuition hikes at the steps of the student center in Chicago on April 24. About 50 students listened to LU students denounce administration plans to increase tuitions and to cut back popular programs such as Black Studies and Women Studies.

Loyola has been spending money hand over fist for such things as expanding into the community, gobbling up other schools, and unsuccessfully building an illegal landfill in Lake Michigan. No, they want to make the students pay. But student organizing has begun. ■

Jr. high students walk out in Pontiac, MI

Hundreds of students walked out of Kennedy Junior High School in Pontiac, Michigan on April 17. They protested the announcement that Kennedy and another local public school will be shut down.

Voters in the Pontiac school district had just approved a \$55 million bond issue in February. That was supposed to

pay off an accumulated debt, renovate schools and prevent school closings. But now the school board claims that is not enough. General Motors plant closings have hit the city hard. But the capitalist politicians would never think of making GM pay to keep the schools afloat. ■

Ohio workers rally against budget cuts

10,000 state workers, welfare recipients, and community activists rallied at the Ohio Statehouse on March 20. They

denounced plans to eliminate General Assistance welfare, lay off thousands of state workers, and other cutbacks. ■

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In 1946, the Kurds in Iran established the Mahabad Democratic Republic. But this could not last long. Britain and the U.S., who were busy propping up the Shah's despotic regime in oil-rich Iran, demanded its dissolution. The Soviet leadership, which had given the Kurdish republic some support, complied in order to make peace with Western imperialism. The Shah's army put down the Kurds. The Kurdish people had again been sold out.

Nixon and Kissinger double deal with the Kurds

In 1973, Nixon and Kissinger had the CIA, via the Shah of Iran, provide some covert aid to rebellious Iraqi Kurds. The U.S. and the Shah wanted to put pressure on the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. When the Iraqi government granted the Shah's border claims in 1975, the Kurds were dumped. Before the ink was dry on that deal, the Iraqi regime went in to massacre the Kurds.

Even before this betrayal, the U.S. government had never intended to help the Kurds wage any type of winning battle. The 1976 Pike Commission in Congress found that "Documents ... clearly show that the President, Dr. Kissinger and the foreign head of state [the Shah] hoped that our clients [the Kurds] would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's [Iran] neighboring country [Iraq]. This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to continue fighting." (The

Continued on page 4
See IMPERIALISM

Loyola University students denounce tuition hikes

Loyola University students rallied against tuition hikes at the steps of the student center in Chicago on April 24. About 50 students listened to LU students denounce administration plans to increase tuitions and to cut back popular programs such as Black Studies and Women Studies.

Loyola has been spending money hand over fist for such things as expanding into the community, gobbling up other schools, and unsuccessfully building an illegal landfill in Lake Michigan. No, they want to make the students pay. But student organizing has begun. ■

Jr. high students walk out in Pontiac, MI

Hundreds of students walked out of Kennedy Junior High School in Pontiac, Michigan on April 17. They protested the announcement that Kennedy and another local public school will be shut down.

Voters in the Pontiac school district had just approved a \$55 million bond issue in February. That was supposed to

pay off an accumulated debt, renovate schools and prevent school closings. But now the school board claims that is not enough. General Motors plant closings have hit the city hard. But the capitalist politicians would never think of making GM pay to keep the schools afloat. ■

Ohio workers rally against budget cuts

10,000 state workers, welfare recipients, and community activists rallied at the Ohio Statehouse on March 20. They

denounced plans to eliminate General Assistance welfare, lay off thousands of state workers, and other cutbacks. ■

Make the rich pay for

CUNY students sit-in against cutbacks

Students in the City University in New York (CUNY) are on the move against tuition hikes and budget cutbacks.

On April 8, students at City College took over the large North Academic Center. Eventually they occupied three additional buildings. And over the next two weeks, sit-ins spread to 11 of the 21 CUNY campuses. The schools were forced to close, or partially shut down, and 52,000 students were out of their classes. As well, solidarity actions took place at two nearby State University campuses, where the students face similar hikes.

On April 24, over 5,000 CUNY students from all campuses demonstrated in the pouring rain. They denounced the cutbacks and tuition hikes and called for taxing the rich. Marching past Governor Cuomo's NYC office, they raised militant slogans against this erstwhile "friend of the people."

The next day the crackdown began. Security guards forced protesting students out of one administration building. And facing threats of flunking out and police repression, students gave up their occupations on two other campuses. Over the next two days, predawn raids by over 300 city police drove protesters out of several more campuses. At least 30 students were arrested.

But the students have not given up the struggle. On April 30 they will join with public employees, health care workers, and people from the communities for a city-wide action against the cutbacks.

The students are fighting Governor Cuomo's proposed \$500 per year tuition increase and a \$400 per award cut in Tuition Assistance for low-income students. As well, Cuomo plans a \$92 million cut in the CUNY budget which means layoffs of faculty and staff, eliminating courses and cutting heavily into the remedial programs required for many of the students coming out of the sub-standard NYC high schools. The tuition

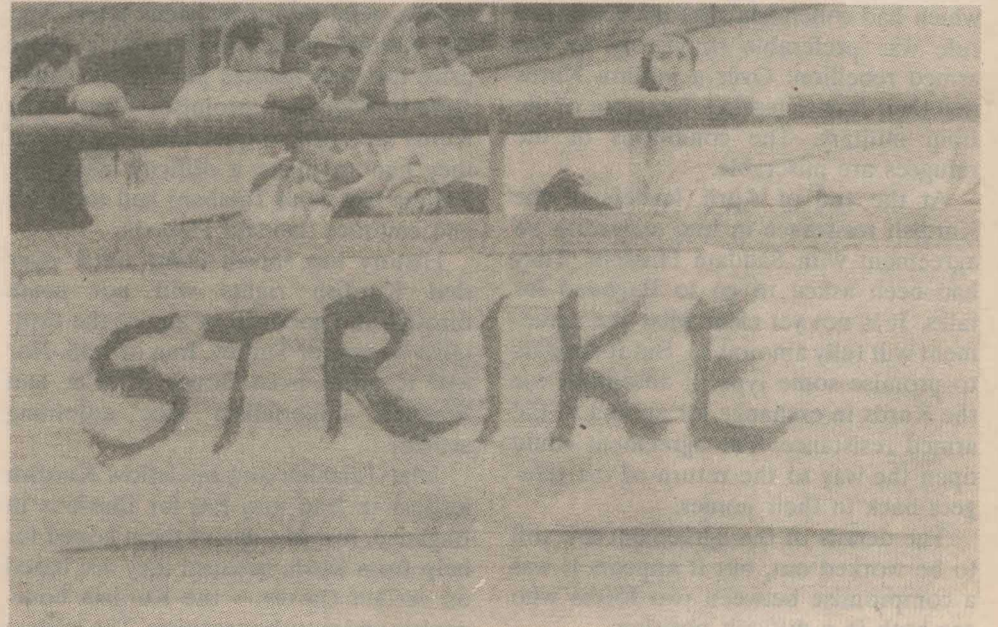
increase would come on top of a \$200 a year rise that took effect this spring.

Cuomo and co. say there is no money to pay for education. But this is just not true. Cuomo has found plenty of money to build prisons and maintain the police forces. At the same time, he has been rolling back state taxes on the capitalist corporations and the wealthy. Why doesn't he tax the rich to pay for the budget crisis? The governor can't answer and simply refused to speak to the protesting students.

Meanwhile, Mayor Dinkins has struck a pose of disagreeing with the CUNY tuition hike and asking Cuomo to reconsider. But he himself has proposed a budget which will mean the layoff of thousands of school teachers, effectively crippling the already lame system of public education in NYC. He has also dropped funding for NYCTC, an important CUNY technical school, from the city budget. And he is as adamant as Cuomo against any further taxes on the big corporations or the high income brackets. What he did was institute a special tax on homeowners, but only to beef up the police. And his reasons are all too clear. While initially saying police should only be used as a last resort against the protesting students, he apparently changed his mind and agreed to the police repression called for by CUNY Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds.

This shows that the state and city governments, with the backing of the CUNY administration, are determined to ram these budget cuts and tuition increases down the throats of City University students. That is all the more reason for the students to stand firm in their protests, and to link up with the growing groundswell against cutbacks on all fronts.

(Taken in part from April 13 "New York Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-New York.)



Striking at City College



Bronx Community College students march

State and municipal crises deepen recession

According to recent surveys, some 28 states and over half the nation's cities are in budget crisis. The deficits total over \$44 billion and are still rising. Planned layoffs now exceed 50,000 state and local workers. Budget slashing is hitting virtually all programs except for prisons and police. And a new wave of tax increases generally targets the working masses through user fees, sales taxes, and regressive assessments.

The budget crises are hitting working people hard. They are also deepening the general capitalist recession.

According to the April 22 issue of *Business Week*, state and local spending

helped overcome past recessions. Outlays by state and local governments, adjusted for inflation, actually rose by an average 5% during past recessions. This was mainly because rising federal grants offset sagging tax revenues.

But this time around federal aid is being cut back and real spending is headed down. It is estimated the cuts in state and local spending will subtract as much as \$10 billion from growth in the Gross National Product in this year alone. Instead of relieving the crisis, state and local budget cuts are adding fuel to the fire.

10,000 denounce education cuts in California

Over 10,000 students, teachers, and parents rallied in Sacramento, California April 3 to protest the plan to cut \$2 billion from state public education. Some 10,000 California teachers have already received pink slips.

Governor Pete Wilson is trying to fix the \$13 billion state deficit by gutting education, welfare, health care and other social programs. At the same time, he is

proposing to increase sales taxes and to suspend collective bargaining rights for many teachers, whom he calls a "special interest." However, Wilson has rejected raising income tax rates for the wealthy or imposing business taxes.

Unfortunately, union leaders are not putting up much of a fight against the cuts or taxes on the poor. In Los Angeles, for example, leaders of the teachers

union have even refused to call mass meetings for fear they would get out of control. Yet rank-and-file teachers and workers have begun to organize and call

for mass struggle. Independent action is what is needed to build up the movement against the cuts.

20,000 state workers march against Massachusetts cuts

The cry of "No layoffs! No furloughs! Make the rich pay!" was heard in Boston April 13 as some 20,000 state and municipal workers rallied against the Massachusetts budget cuts. They were protesting the recent round of cutbacks by Governor Weld which include two to three week furloughs, pay freezes, increased payment for health care, layoffs, and social service cuts.

Protesters marched to the State House along the "Weld Walk of Devastation" which included 13 stops around Boston Commons at various social service and government agencies that have endured cuts. They also protested at law firms and lobby groups who have fought higher business taxes.

The Marxist-Leninist Party joined with a militant contingent of hospital workers and encouraged slogans like: "They say cutback, we say strike back!" "Republicans, Democrats, no more cuts!" "Tax the rich, not the poor, no more cuts!" The big MLP banner read "No Cutbacks, No Furloughs, No Layoffs, No Wage and Benefit Cuts, MAKE THE RICH PAY!"

Over 2,000 copies of the April 9 issue of the *Boston Worker* were grabbed up by protesters.

The masses were angry and not willing to put up with the usual empty promises from the capitalist politicians. When Boston Mayor Ray Flynn rose to speak, he was booed. And most people left the rally site rather than listen to the politicians and union bureaucrats.

The *Boston Worker* pointed out, "The fight against cutbacks will not be won with one demonstration. And it will not be won by putting our faith in Democratic 'friends of labor' as our union leaders so often tell us. These so-called 'friends of labor' have gone along with every cut in domestic programs of Reagan and Bush. They passed the tax breaks for the wealthy. When Weld said 'Furlough the state workers!' the Democrats said 'Make them work without pay.' The squabbles between Weld and the Democratic-controlled legislature are only minor points. The attack on the working people

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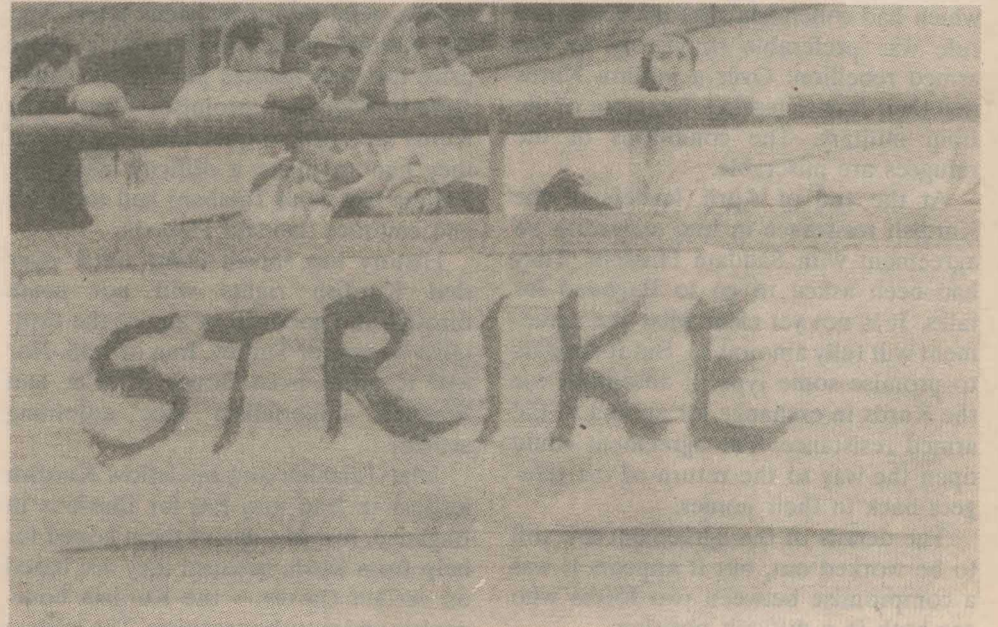
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or the budget crises!

No to the war on the poor!

Layoffs are mounting. Poverty is spreading like a plague. And many people are turning to their last refuge — the welfare programs. But all too often they are finding that they cannot get into the programs. And, even if they do, the benefits have been slashed to starvation levels.

In January, for example, the AFDC (Aid for Families of Dependent Children) caseload grew to a record 4.26 million families. That is about 12 million individuals, two-thirds of them children. But if inflation is taken into account, AFDC and food stamps benefits together have fallen by about 25% in the last twenty years. In some states you have to be suffering at 70% below the official poverty line to receive welfare. And then what you get will hardly feed you.

Still, this year, AFDC and other welfare programs have become the favorite target of the Republican and Democratic budget slashers. Of course the way the capitalist politicians talk you would not know that they are grabbing the last morsel from the mouths of hungry children. Oh no, they claim they are "helping" the poor. They say they are "breaking the cycle of dependency," or "re-establishing the primacy of the family" or emphasizing "preventative" programs.

The highly moral capitalist politicians would never think of attacking the poor. Heavens no. They will help the poor — even if it starves them to death.

Breaking the "cycle of dependency" or breaking the poor

A series of programs — from "workfare" to "learnfare" — are being launched to supposedly "break the cycle of dependency" on welfare. Of course welfare is a humiliating system which not only keeps the poor in poverty but also forces them on their knees before the degrading bureaucracy. But the new programs should really be named "NoFare," because far from uplifting the poor they are simply cutting benefits and punishing the poor for their poverty.

Workfare was lauded to the skies back when it was launched nationally by Congress in 1988. But neither Washington nor the states have provided the necessary funding for childcare, medical benefits, job-training or decent-paying jobs that would allow welfare recipients to become workers. The program was collapsing even before it started. And now, faced with budget crises, even states that were praised as workfare pioneers

— like California — are slashing their programs.

As well, many states are using the same "workfare" rationale to simply slash welfare. Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and other states, for example, have plans to simply abolish General Assistance welfare. They claim this program benefits only able-bodied people who should be working. But when asked where these people are to find jobs, an aid to Michigan's Governor Engler recently replied that they should "move to Indiana."

No learning from "learnfare"

Many states are also launching "learnfare" programs. In Wisconsin, Michigan, and some other states the plan is to cut all benefits for teen-agers who have a poor school attendance record. Although most people recognized that poverty itself is the biggest cause for bad school attendance, the states are taking the unique approach of intensifying poverty rather than alleviating it.

The fact that this program is really not aimed at improving schooling was graphically demonstrated in Michigan when Governor Engler recently declared it would save the state \$1 million next year. Cuts, not education, is the real name of

the game.

Barring the poor from having children

The capitalists seem to see the ultimate solution in simply preventing the poor from having children. In the 1960's, the bureaucrats sterilized many welfare mothers — sometimes without their knowledge, sometimes under pressure. Now some states want to create a system of economic coercion for the same purpose. In Wisconsin and Michigan, for example, there are plans to allow welfare families no additional stipend when they have more children. In Kansas a bill has been put up to pay \$500 to a recipient who agrees to have long-term contraception surgically implanted.

And the list of outrages goes on. The welfare system is, of course, no solution for poverty. But cutting the existing crumbs of assistance is just sentencing the poor to worse misery. Workers everywhere must help the poor fight back against the cuts. Confront the capitalist system that condemns a whole section of working people to such poverty. ■

Down with Bush's "education strategy"

No more school cutbacks!

Continued from front page

in inner-city schools for the last decade. The bipartisan education strategy is to let the schools decay. Even the very largest Democratic party plan, put forward in the House by Representative Ford of Michigan, only talks of \$2.4 billion. It would leave the cycle of cutbacks in place.

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But, Bush declares in setting forward his strategy, "dollars don't educate students." Instead, the poor are to be fed big words about "choice." If only there is "choice," who needs money?

Let's examine one model of education without dollars. A year and a half ago, the Bush administration pointed proudly

to the Richmond Unified School District in northern California. Here was a model of choice in action, providing educational improvement without added dollars. And just look at Richmond shining new "System Choice"! It provided a series of "magnet schools," each offering a special curriculum.

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MASSACHUSETTS Continued from page 6

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New York home care workers hold one-day strike

30,000 home care workers held a one-day strike in New York City on April 17. They demanded a new contract and denounced the budget cuts called for by Mayor Dinkins and Governor Cuomo. Thousands marched through Manhattan's financial district carrying signs reading "Justice for Home Care Workers" and "On Strike for Our Clients, Our Families and Ourselves."

Home care workers do housekeeping, cooking, shopping and other services for some 50,000 indigent and elderly clients who would otherwise be forced into nursing homes. They are employed by private agencies that are under contract with the city's Human Resources Admin-

istration. Funding comes from both the state and city.

Overwhelmingly women and minorities, they make at most \$6.60 an hour, get minimal health coverage and no pensions. They have been without a contract for almost a year. And Mayor Dinkins, who would like to carry out cuts against them, has so far refused to negotiate a new contract. Meanwhile, Governor Cuomo has proposed eliminating all funding for the housekeeping program, which would wipe out 15% of the home care workers' jobs. As well, cuts planned in Medicare and Medicaid would result in further job cuts. ■

Something like how certain savings and loans associations did it, with a similar crash in the end.

Without money, the talk of new programs is a fraud.

Taking from the poor

Actually, Bush's national education strategy does not simply fail to provide funds; it is even worse. It provides for stripping funds from struggling inner-city schools in the name of rewarding successful schools. Since the school budget isn't to be increased, the rewards for some schools will be taken from the funding for other schools.

And how will success be measured? There is to be a series of national standardized tests. Naturally the underfunded schools, the schools serving the disadvantaged, the schools with large numbers of students for whom English is a second language, and others will generally not show up too well on these tests — even if the pupils in these schools are making excellent progress.

It is a major scandal that school funding differs radically from school district to district inside a single state. Rich districts provide two or three times the funding per student as the poorest districts. And this is despite the repeated willingness of poor districts to vote heavy tax rates, far heavier than those in the rich districts, to pay for the schools. When it comes to the poor districts, Bush tells them money doesn't make a difference. But when it comes to the rich districts, Bush declares that good schools should be rewarded — financially, of course.

Real educational reform

Real concern for education requires funds for the schools. It means especially improving the funding of the schools in poor districts. Even school lunch and milk programs have been slashed, and successful programs like Head Start have never, to this day, received sufficient funds to cover all eligible children. And reform means ending the glaring disparities whereby workers and the poor pay

sky-high taxes, much higher than rich districts, only to see their children attend schools with far less money per student.

Real educational reform requires involving the mass of working class and poor parents, and not just pouring money into the pockets of contractors and administrators. But the Bush strategy would leave things in the hands of the upper-class snobs who look down on the working masses and their children.

Real educational reform means involving the mass of students. It requires respect for students who speak other languages, and opposition to the growing racist atmosphere that oppresses the minorities. But the bilingual programs have been sliced to ribbons, and the "drug war" lock-em-up mentality means making schools into prisons.

Real educational reform requires a network of social programs for the poor and disadvantaged, but they are still being cut right and left by the wealthy classes and their representatives, Bush and Congress. And the education bills put forward by Bush and Congress are to be paid for by slashing funds from other social programs. Bush and Congress are not giving the schools a new deal, but are simply rearranging a losing hand.

The class struggle is not only apparent in the work place, but in the devastation of the schools. Unless the working class stands up for its rights, it will only see the further oppression of its youth. The money for education will continue to flow to the wealthy districts, and the schools for the working majority will have to make do with less and less. Instead of educating and inspiring the students, the schools will resort to bigger sticks to beat them, and more old-time chauvinism and bigotry to drug them with.

Bush has an educational strategy like the oil companies have an environmental policy — enrich the wealthy classes and leave a big spreading blight to be dealt with by the working people. It is time that the working class has its own education strategy — a mass struggle over school issues as well as against work place exploitation. ■

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Home care workers do housekeeping, cooking, shopping and other services for some 50,000 indigent and elderly clients who would otherwise be forced into nursing homes. They are employed by private agencies that are under contract with the city's Human Resources Admin-

istration. Funding comes from both the state and city.

Overwhelmingly women and minorities, they make at most \$6.60 an hour, get minimal health coverage and no pensions. They have been without a contract for almost a year. And Mayor Dinkins, who would like to carry out cuts against them, has so far refused to negotiate a new contract. Meanwhile, Governor Cuomo has proposed eliminating all funding for the housekeeping program, which would wipe out 15% of the home care workers' jobs. As well, cuts planned in Medicare and Medicaid would result in further job cuts. ■

Something like how certain savings and loans associations did it, with a similar crash in the end.

Without money, the talk of new programs is a fraud.

Taking from the poor

Actually, Bush's national education strategy does not simply fail to provide funds; it is even worse. It provides for stripping funds from struggling inner-city schools in the name of rewarding successful schools. Since the school budget isn't to be increased, the rewards for some schools will be taken from the funding for other schools.

And how will success be measured? There is to be a series of national standardized tests. Naturally the underfunded schools, the schools serving the disadvantaged, the schools with large numbers of students for whom English is a second language, and others will generally not show up too well on these tests — even if the pupils in these schools are making excellent progress.

It is a major scandal that school funding differs radically from school district to district inside a single state. Rich districts provide two or three times the funding per student as the poorest districts. And this is despite the repeated willingness of poor districts to vote heavy tax rates, far heavier than those in the rich districts, to pay for the schools. When it comes to the poor districts, Bush tells them money doesn't make a difference. But when it comes to the rich districts, Bush declares that good schools should be rewarded — financially, of course.

Real educational reform

Real concern for education requires funds for the schools. It means especially improving the funding of the schools in poor districts. Even school lunch and milk programs have been slashed, and successful programs like Head Start have never, to this day, received sufficient funds to cover all eligible children. And reform means ending the glaring disparities whereby workers and the poor pay

sky-high taxes, much higher than rich districts, only to see their children attend schools with far less money per student.

Real educational reform requires involving the mass of working class and poor parents, and not just pouring money into the pockets of contractors and administrators. But the Bush strategy would leave things in the hands of the upper-class snobs who look down on the working masses and their children.

Real educational reform means involving the mass of students. It requires respect for students who speak other languages, and opposition to the growing racist atmosphere that oppresses the minorities. But the bilingual programs have been sliced to ribbons, and the "drug war" lock-em-up mentality means making schools into prisons.

Real educational reform requires a network of social programs for the poor and disadvantaged, but they are still being cut right and left by the wealthy classes and their representatives, Bush and Congress. And the education bills put forward by Bush and Congress are to be paid for by slashing funds from other social programs. Bush and Congress are not giving the schools a new deal, but are simply rearranging a losing hand.

The class struggle is not only apparent in the work place, but in the devastation of the schools. Unless the working class stands up for its rights, it will only see the further oppression of its youth. The money for education will continue to flow to the wealthy districts, and the schools for the working majority will have to make do with less and less. Instead of educating and inspiring the students, the schools will resort to bigger sticks to beat them, and more old-time chauvinism and bigotry to drug them with.

Bush has an educational strategy like the oil companies have an environmental policy — enrich the wealthy classes and leave a big spreading blight to be dealt with by the working people. It is time that the working class has its own education strategy — a mass struggle over school issues as well as against work place exploitation. ■

Communism and jobs

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A permanent army of unemployed

But more. Even when the boom comes, even when capitalist production is again running full tilt, unemployment has not fallen back to its previous lowest level. What the American capitalists used to call "full employment," back in 1944, meant some 1.2% of the workers were without jobs. But today the capitalists call it "full employment" when over 5% are officially unemployed. The fact is that capitalism produces, along with vast wealth for a handful of bosses, a more-or-less permanent army of unemployed. Take, for example, technological innovation. Computerization, robotization, and other technological advances lighten work and speed up production. This should be a tremendous gain to the working masses. But under capitalism every gain goes not to the masses but to the capitalist owners. Instead of helping the masses, technological advances are used to increase profits by throwing many workers out of their jobs. And then the capitalists use this army of unemployed like a weapon to enforce overwork and to drive down the wages of those lucky enough to find jobs.

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Neither the free market nor state capitalism can solve the unemployment problem

Capitalism simply cannot solve the jobless problem because economic crises and the creation of a whole army of unemployed are basic conditions of its existence. To eliminate unemployment we have to do away with the system that produces it. We have to move forward to a new system, to communism.

But the second you mention it, Bush and his apologists rush forward to heap ridicule on the so-called "socialism" of the Soviet Union. Oh, unemployment was held down there for a time, but their economy has stagnated with unproductive, backward industries that cannot even produce necessary consumer goods for the masses. And now they are in a real mess.

Of course all of that is true. But then the Soviet Union is not socialist. It is a state-capitalist regime where production is for the profit of a wealthy bureaucratic ruling class.

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Communism needed to end unemployment

Communism is what is needed to put an end to the economic crises that periodically devastate the masses.

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Here Engels is explaining that once the private market is overcome, once production is regulated directly and not through various financial levers and other indirect means, then organizing a planned economy to serve the needs of the masses is relatively easy. But overcoming the market and making the transition from capitalism through various stages to communism is a hard struggle — a struggle in which the working class must take power, learn to organize work conscious-

ly rather than need the whip of hunger, and step-by-step radically transform the entire economy.

Production for profit and capitalist methods are gradually overcome in one field after another, and production is freed to grow to serve the needs of the masses. This will not just be a consumer society with more things, but the end of the profit system will unleash gigantic forces to really tackle such problems as transforming production to be in tune with the environment, making the workplace worker-friendly, etc. The vast fields of useful endeavor opened up will mean that communism always has work enough for all. And, what is more, putting the jobless to work, technological advances and increased productivity become means to improve the lot of the masses by, for example, shortening the working day.

As Engels described, "you will find that human society has an abundance of productive forces at its disposal which only await a rational organization, regulated distribution, in order to go into operation to the greatest benefit of all...we can assume that given this kind of organization, the present customary labor time of the individual will be reduced by half simply by making use of the labor which is either not used at all or used disadvantageously." (*Ibid.*)

With full employment, and with the shortening of the working day, the masses are no longer slaves scrambling through their lives to make ends meet, but are freed to do other things, to join in the collective running of the society, to add their individual inspiration to the improvement of the life of all.

Of course, these changes cannot come all at once. But they will begin only through a revolution. A revolution in which the working class will overthrow the capitalist ruling class. A revolution in which the working masses will rid themselves of all the backward muck of the past and become fitted to found society anew.

Unemployment and the boom-bust cycle

In March "official" unemployment soared to 8.8 million workers. But that is only part of the story. There were another 6.2 million "involuntary part-time" workers — those who want full-time work but can find only part-time jobs. And on top of that, there were another one million "discouraged" workers — those not counted as unemployed simply because they could not find a job and have given up looking.

That is a total of 16 million unemployed or half-employed. But only 26% of them — about 4.2 million workers — were allowed to draw unemployment benefits.

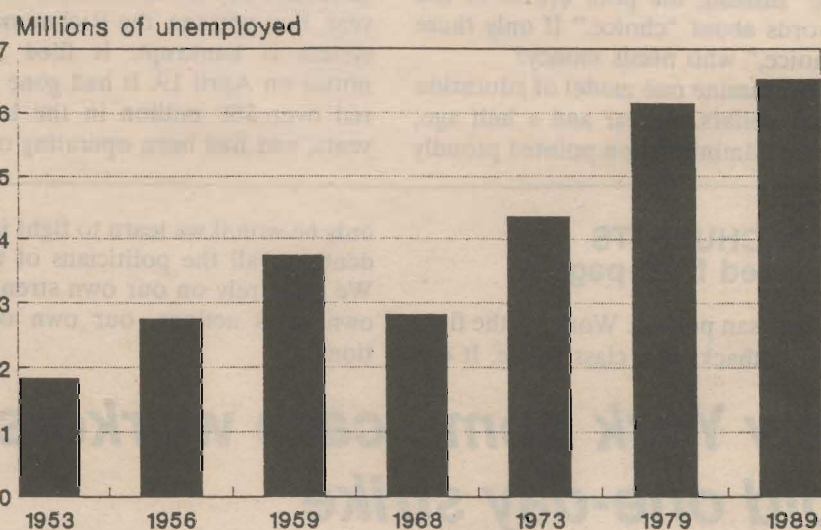
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But even then, when employment reaches a new peak there are still more people unemployed than in the previous boom. In every cycle since World War II, except for 1968, the number of unemployed grew from boom to boom.

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Unemployment in the boom years
The numbers keep rising
even in the best of years



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

boom in 1979. What fell under Reagan was not the number of unemployed but, rather, the official rate of unemployment (to a low of 5.1% in June of 1990 from 5.8% in 1979).

And even these figures cover up a basic fact of what has been going on under the Reagan and Bush government — the growth of a huge stratum of underemployed or half-employed workers.

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Reaganism did not put America back to work. Rather, the "recovery" actually enlarged the army of unemployed and half-employed and used it to pressure the employed to give in to takebacks of wages, benefits and work rules.

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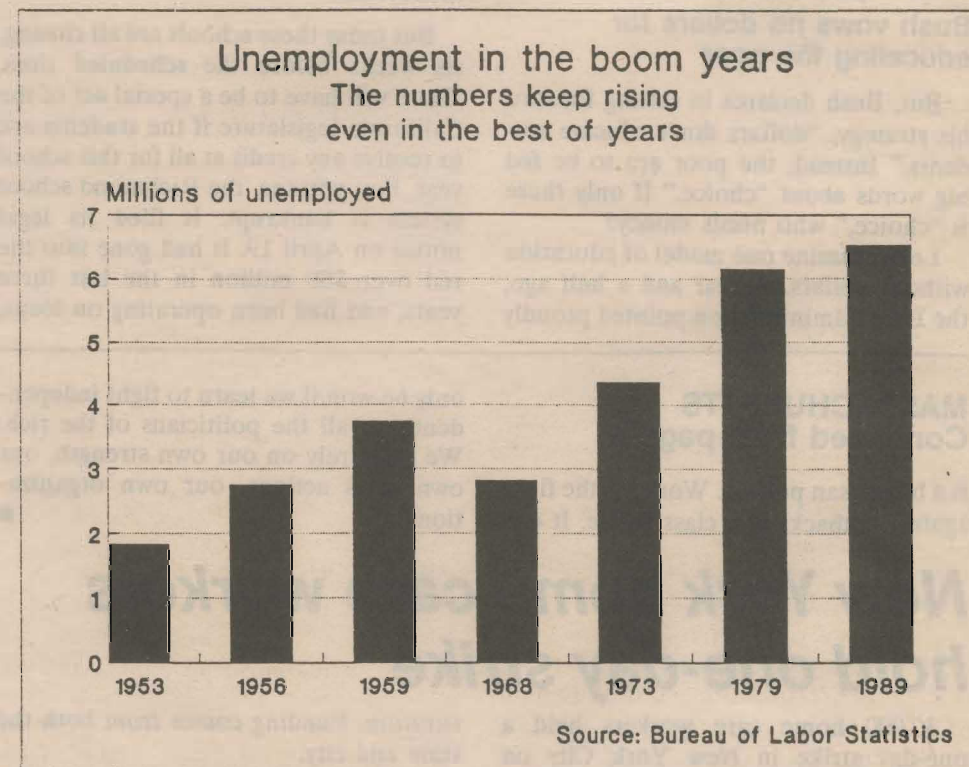
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Step up the defense of women's rights!

'Parental consent' brings judicial tyranny against women

This March, a parental consent law took effect in Michigan. It requires women under 18 who want an abortion to get written consent from a parent or guardian. There is also the alternative of getting a judge to approve the abortion.

The "pro-life" hypocrites promote such laws as strengthening family relations. In fact, they only intend them to make the exercise of women's rights as difficult and painful as possible. It is no secret that good family relations cannot be enforced by government decree. The real effect of the law is to create potential tragedies by forcing young women to submit to the least understanding parents, or even absent and abusive parents, and the arbitrary whim of judges.

The anti-abortion crusaders would prefer to ban all abortions, but they pretend that the present laws are oh so kind by allowing for a judicial bypass of parental approval in cases of necessity. This has won the hearts of the U.S. Supreme Court which has ruled that parental consent laws are constitutional as long as there are judicial waiver procedures. But the red tape of legal procedures is a serious obstacle to most young women. Moreover, all judges are not going to be sympathetic to young women, especially poor and minority women. In fact, many judges will simply impose their anti-abortion prejudices or upper-class snobbery on women.

Just look what has gone on in Michigan in the last few weeks.

Clinton County probate judge Marvin Robertson announced he planned to appoint a guardian for the fetus in any parental consent case he handles. Presumably this is a signal that he will not

only deny abortion but consider giving custody of the fetus to a stranger. In any case, Robertson will either appoint a complete stranger to argue for the birth of the fetus, or else he will call in relatives or the parents themselves. Instead of the idyllic pictures of a private, sympathetic hearing by a caring judge, the young women may be faced with an adversary proceeding, presumably complete with cross examination, attacks on her character, investigation into her background and the calling of witnesses.

Meanwhile, Kalamazoo County probate judge Donald Halstead recently dismissed the court petition of a young woman seeking an abortion on the grounds that he thinks the whole idea of having a judicial bypass of parental approval is unconstitutional. Getting an abortion approved in his court will be like making ice cubes on the sun.

Then there is Judge Francis Bourisseau of Mason County. He announced in advance he would only grant abortions in rare cases. The *Ludington Daily News* reported that he gave such examples as rape by a family member and if a white girl was raped by a black man. Lovely, is it not? You may actually get an abortion waiver from Bourisseau provided that his disgusting racist stereotypes overrule his anti-women prejudices.

These black-robed bigots show that the judicial bypass procedures submit young women to arbitrary judicial tyranny. And they also demonstrate the sort of racist and sexist idiocy that permeates the ranks of the anti-abortion crusaders. It shows why the decision of whether to bear a child must rest with the pregnant woman. ■

Once again, the big stick replaces treatment

Encouraged by Bush and the U.S. Supreme Court, bigoted forces in state after state have been attacking abortion rights. In January, Utah jumped on the bandwagon. A new law bans almost all abortions. The only exceptions are when

the pregnancy threatens the woman's life or in cases of rape or incest, providing the crime is reported within 20 weeks.

Thus the "pro-life" forces have taken another step to drive women into mutilation and death in illegal, back-alley

abortions or force them to have a child against their will. To top it off, the Utah law contained language making it possible for a woman to get the death penalty for having an abortion.

The backers of this law tried to deny this. But now the law's author himself, Senator LeRay, admits it, and concedes there should be a special legislative session to amend the bill.

Perhaps the Utah legislators did not really intend to kill women who have abortions. But since the "right-to-life" rhetoric equates abortion with murder, the death sentence is only logical. And

this anti-woman logic has already inspired the bombing of health clinics and the harassment of women, doctors, and nurses at health facilities. Indeed, only last month the Bush administration reaffirmed its position that family planning clinics receiving government funds should not be allowed to mention abortion to a woman even if it was medically necessary to save her life.

And even if the "pro-life" Utah bill is amended, it will still subject women to a potential death sentence at the hands of back-alley butchers. ■

Utah 'pro-life' bill — a death sentence for women

In mid-April, a Florida appeals court upheld the conviction of Jennifer Clarise Johnson for having used cocaine while pregnant. In order to convict her as a drug-dealing felon, rather than provide treatment to her as an addict, she was charged with "drug dealing" through her umbilical cord to her newborn infant. Johnson had sought treatment while pregnant, but was refused.

Such "drug dealing" charges, sometimes involving the legal drug, alcohol, have become something of a fad. Nationwide, there are already 35 such cases. For example, in early April prosecutor Tague in Muskegon County, Michigan was about to try such a case against Kimberly Hardy, but the state Court of Appeals squashed the charges. And in February, Wyoming authorities went so far as to arrest a pregnant woman who had sought treatment in a hospital emergency room after being beaten by her husband; she was charged with child abuse because the hospital told the authorities the woman was drunk.

So far, in most cases the charges either have been thrown out of court, or the convictions have been overturned by higher courts. But many of these cases are still to be considered by yet higher courts. And the Florida case reportedly marks the first time a state appeals court has approved such a conviction.

The arrests of pregnant women are being carried out in the name of protecting the fetus. But in reality, the threat of prosecution is another obstacle prevent-

ing women with drug problems from seeking and getting treatment. Already pregnant women, especially poor women, are routinely excluded from most drug treatment centers. Often, it is precisely because they seek treatment that they are identified and turned over to the police. The moralizing prosecutors see nothing wrong with clinics turning away pregnant women, or politicians failing to fund these clinics, but prefer to jail women, take their children away from them, or otherwise ruin their lives.

In the Florida case, the woman was not sent to jail but was sentenced to 14 years probation and participation in a drug treatment program. By including drug treatment, the Florida court hoped to look humane and caring. But if treatment had been the issue, there was no need for criminal charges at all, as Jennifer Johnson had sought treatment on her own before the law was ever involved. And what does 14 years probation mean? That a single misstep will mean jail and forcible separation from her children? That state officials will hound her and her family for years?

Chalk up another one for Bush's fraudulent "war on drugs." It means less and less money for clinics and treatment centers and more and more money for prosecutors, prison guards, and jails. It will not stop the ravages of drug addiction or save babies, but it will provide self-righteous excuses for beating up on women. ■

KURDS Continued from front page

called for Saddam's overthrow, he had never wanted a popular uprising against Saddam to win. He had merely wanted Saddam's place to be taken by someone from within his regime, Saddam II.

The Iraqi civil war has now seen Saddam's crackdown which has unleashed a flood of refugees into neighboring Iran and Turkey. Thousands of people have died in their flight.

As the Kurdish refugee tragedy built, the U.S. government played deaf. At first, they even hesitated to provide relief supplies. Then they shed a few crocodile tears, dropped a few crates (killing some refugees that way), and were going to leave it at that. But at the crisis built, and the "great U.S. victory" was becoming tarnished, that policy proved untenable. Now Bush the humanitarian has stepped forth.

Are we to believe that Bush the organizer of so much grief in Iraq has now become a friend of the people? Hell no.

What will the refugee camps that U.S. troops are setting up amount to? Yes, a few people may go there and get some

food and medical aid. But the camps will be nothing but miserable tent cities. The U.S. has also promised to make sure that the camps do not become "bases for terrorism" — in other words, Kurdish guerrilla fighters will be kept under control.

Why is Bush setting up these camps?

The main reason is obscured by the U.S. media. This is the fact that the U.S. government's close ally, the right-wing Turkish government, refuses to let Kurdish refugees down from the mountains into the lowlands. The Turkish rulers are afraid to let the Iraqi and Turkish Kurds mingle with one another.

Moreover, Bush's plan of the "Pentagon as refugee relief" allows him a chance to regain standing among the Kurds. Kurdish refugees had been expressing bitter complaints over the cynical playing with their struggle. Now some candy and tents are to make up.

And as well, the latest intervention serves to keep an occupation force in Iraq. This increases Saddam's political difficulties inside his regime. The U.S. government has not given up the hope

of squeezing him out through a military coup.

A war of big and small profitmakers against the working people

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a bigger share of oil profits and expand his control over the region.

Bush and Saddam created this tragedy. And they have both kept at it. The war was a war over capitalist ambitions. But this war should teach the world's people many important lessons. None of the contending powers are friends of the working people. Not the U.S., Western Europe, Russia or China. Not the United Nations. Not the Arab governments. They are all in the control of the lords of wealth, and it is the working people who pay for their squabbles.

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Step up the defense of women's rights!

'Parental consent' brings judicial tyranny against women

This March, a parental consent law took effect in Michigan. It requires women under 18 who want an abortion to get written consent from a parent or guardian. There is also the alternative of getting a judge to approve the abortion.

The "pro-life" hypocrites promote such laws as strengthening family relations. In fact, they only intend them to make the exercise of women's rights as difficult and painful as possible. It is no secret that good family relations cannot be enforced by government decree. The real effect of the law is to create potential tragedies by forcing young women to submit to the least understanding parents, or even absent and abusive parents, and the arbitrary whim of judges.

The anti-abortion crusaders would prefer to ban all abortions, but they pretend that the present laws are oh so kind by allowing for a judicial bypass of parental approval in cases of necessity. This has won the hearts of the U.S. Supreme Court which has ruled that parental consent laws are constitutional as long as there are judicial waiver procedures. But the red tape of legal procedures is a serious obstacle to most young women. Moreover, all judges are not going to be sympathetic to young women, especially poor and minority women. In fact, many judges will simply impose their anti-abortion prejudices or upper-class snobbery on women.

Just look what has gone on in Michigan in the last few weeks.

Clinton County probate judge Marvin Robertson announced he planned to appoint a guardian for the fetus in any parental consent case he handles. Presumably this is a signal that he will not

only deny abortion but consider giving custody of the fetus to a stranger. In any case, Robertson will either appoint a complete stranger to argue for the birth of the fetus, or else he will call in relatives or the parents themselves. Instead of the idyllic pictures of a private, sympathetic hearing by a caring judge, the young women may be faced with an adversary proceeding, presumably complete with cross examination, attacks on her character, investigation into her background and the calling of witnesses.

Meanwhile, Kalamazoo County probate judge Donald Halstead recently dismissed the court petition of a young woman seeking an abortion on the grounds that he thinks the whole idea of having a judicial bypass of parental approval is unconstitutional. Getting an abortion approved in his court will be like making ice cubes on the sun.

Then there is Judge Francis Bourisseau of Mason County. He announced in advance he would only grant abortions in rare cases. The *Ludington Daily News* reported that he gave such examples as rape by a family member and if a white girl was raped by a black man. Lovely, is it not? You may actually get an abortion waiver from Bourisseau provided that his disgusting racist stereotypes overrule his anti-women prejudices.

These black-robed bigots show that the judicial bypass procedures submit young women to arbitrary judicial tyranny. And they also demonstrate the sort of racist and sexist idiocy that permeates the ranks of the anti-abortion crusaders. It shows why the decision of whether to bear a child must rest with the pregnant woman. ■

Once again, the big stick replaces treatment

Encouraged by Bush and the U.S. Supreme Court, bigoted forces in state after state have been attacking abortion rights. In January, Utah jumped on the bandwagon. A new law bans almost all abortions. The only exceptions are when

the pregnancy threatens the woman's life or in cases of rape or incest, providing the crime is reported within 20 weeks.

Thus the "pro-life" forces have taken another step to drive women into mutilation and death in illegal, back-alley

abortions or force them to have a child against their will. To top it off, the Utah law contained language making it possible for a woman to get the death penalty for having an abortion.

The backers of this law tried to deny this. But now the law's author himself, Senator LeRay, admits it, and concedes there should be a special legislative session to amend the bill.

Perhaps the Utah legislators did not really intend to kill women who have abortions. But since the "right-to-life" rhetoric equates abortion with murder, the death sentence is only logical. And

this anti-woman logic has already inspired the bombing of health clinics and the harassment of women, doctors, and nurses at health facilities. Indeed, only last month the Bush administration reaffirmed its position that family planning clinics receiving government funds should not be allowed to mention abortion to a woman even if it was medically necessary to save her life.

And even if the "pro-life" Utah bill is amended, it will still subject women to a potential death sentence at the hands of back-alley butchers. ■

Utah 'pro-life' bill — a death sentence for women

In mid-April, a Florida appeals court upheld the conviction of Jennifer Clarise Johnson for having used cocaine while pregnant. In order to convict her as a drug-dealing felon, rather than provide treatment to her as an addict, she was charged with "drug dealing" through her umbilical cord to her newborn infant. Johnson had sought treatment while pregnant, but was refused.

Such "drug dealing" charges, sometimes involving the legal drug, alcohol, have become something of a fad. Nationwide, there are already 35 such cases. For example, in early April prosecutor Tague in Muskegon County, Michigan was about to try such a case against Kimberly Hardy, but the state Court of Appeals squashed the charges. And in February, Wyoming authorities went so far as to arrest a pregnant woman who had sought treatment in a hospital emergency room after being beaten by her husband; she was charged with child abuse because the hospital told the authorities the woman was drunk.

So far, in most cases the charges either have been thrown out of court, or the convictions have been overturned by higher courts. But many of these cases are still to be considered by yet higher courts. And the Florida case reportedly marks the first time a state appeals court has approved such a conviction.

The arrests of pregnant women are being carried out in the name of protecting the fetus. But in reality, the threat of prosecution is another obstacle prevent-

ing women with drug problems from seeking and getting treatment. Already pregnant women, especially poor women, are routinely excluded from most drug treatment centers. Often, it is precisely because they seek treatment that they are identified and turned over to the police. The moralizing prosecutors see nothing wrong with clinics turning away pregnant women, or politicians failing to fund these clinics, but prefer to jail women, take their children away from them, or otherwise ruin their lives.

In the Florida case, the woman was not sent to jail but was sentenced to 14 years probation and participation in a drug treatment program. By including drug treatment, the Florida court hoped to look humane and caring. But if treatment had been the issue, there was no need for criminal charges at all, as Jennifer Johnson had sought treatment on her own before the law was ever involved. And what does 14 years probation mean? That a single misstep will mean jail and forcible separation from her children? That state officials will hound her and her family for years?

Chalk up another one for Bush's fraudulent "war on drugs." It means less and less money for clinics and treatment centers and more and more money for prosecutors, prison guards, and jails. It will not stop the ravages of drug addiction or save babies, but it will provide self-righteous excuses for beating up on women. ■

KURDS Continued from front page

called for Saddam's overthrow, he had never wanted a popular uprising against Saddam to win. He had merely wanted Saddam's place to be taken by someone from within his regime, Saddam II.

The Iraqi civil war has now seen Saddam's crackdown which has unleashed a flood of refugees into neighboring Iran and Turkey. Thousands of people have died in their flight.

As the Kurdish refugee tragedy built, the U.S. government played deaf. At first, they even hesitated to provide relief supplies. Then they shed a few crocodile tears, dropped a few crates (killing some refugees that way), and were going to leave it at that. But at the crisis built, and the "great U.S. victory" was becoming tarnished, that policy proved untenable. Now Bush the humanitarian has stepped forth.

Are we to believe that Bush the organizer of so much grief in Iraq has now become a friend of the people? Hell no.

What will the refugee camps that U.S. troops are setting up amount to? Yes, a few people may go there and get some

food and medical aid. But the camps will be nothing but miserable tent cities. The U.S. has also promised to make sure that the camps do not become "bases for terrorism" — in other words, Kurdish guerrilla fighters will be kept under control.

Why is Bush setting up these camps?

The main reason is obscured by the U.S. media. This is the fact that the U.S. government's close ally, the right-wing Turkish government, refuses to let Kurdish refugees down from the mountains into the lowlands. The Turkish rulers are afraid to let the Iraqi and Turkish Kurds mingle with one another.

Moreover, Bush's plan of the "Pentagon as refugee relief" allows him a chance to regain standing among the Kurds. Kurdish refugees had been expressing bitter complaints over the cynical playing with their struggle. Now some candy and tents are to make up.

And as well, the latest intervention serves to keep an occupation force in Iraq. This increases Saddam's political difficulties inside his regime. The U.S. government has not given up the hope

of squeezing him out through a military coup.

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Gorbachev and Yeltsin unite against strikes

The nationwide strike of Soviet coal miners has completed its second full month. Some 3-400,000 miners have walked off their jobs in a protest demanding economic changes, as well as the resignation of Gorbachev and the current Soviet parliament.

With the massive price hikes announced by Gorbachev's regime in early April, the miners have been joined by many other striking workers.

At the center of a growing strike movement

The coal miners are not satisfied with carrying out local strikes. They are organizing themselves on a national basis through industry conferences. And they are also helping organize other sections of workers.

A major center of the miners' activism is Novokuznetsk, in the Kuzbas region 2,000 miles southeast of Moscow. Two-thirds of the coal mines in this region are on strike. The local strike committee in Novokuznetsk has sent delegations of miners as far as Moscow and Leningrad to organize factory work-

ers.

This work has borne fruit. New sections of coal miners join the strike every week, even though a few have gone back. In April miners on the island of Sakhalin, off the Pacific coast of Siberia, joined; also miners in the Kursk-Belgorod district of European Russia. The national newspaper *Izvestia* now estimates that coal production is down 80%.

The miners are rallying a growing number of other workers to industrial action. In Lithuania a dock workers' strike has virtually closed the port of Klaipeda. One-day strikes are being used by many sections of workers, including Siberian gold miners, who struck on April 22.

In some areas the one-day strikes have mushroomed into general strikes. The entire city of Donetsk, center of the Donbas coal region in the Ukraine, was shut down on April 15. Some 20,000 workers rallied in the city's central square in support of the coal miners' demands. A similar citywide strike occurred April 16 in Kiev, the country's third largest city.

Soviet workers rebel against economic collapse



Striking workers in Minsk demand Gorbachev's resignation

The Soviet Union is seeing a rash of strikes this spring. What is the economic background to these actions?

Coal miners in the Soviet Union are striking because they have reached a point where it almost makes no sense at all to work. The miners are paid a relatively high wage for Soviet workers. But consumer goods — food, clothing, etc. — are in very short supply. And you can forget about such things as appliances. Hunger is spreading, and medicine is scarce.

The miners' living and working conditions have generally been poor too. They perform some of the most arduous and dangerous work in industry. Yet many of them live in antiquated communities with unpaved roads, meager electricity, and cabin-style homes lacking indoor plumbing. Their conditions of work are atrocious, with many falling victim to death and disease. Their bosses treat them like serfs, and the old, official unions were just another arm of the state-capitalist bureaucrats.

Gorbachev promised much, delivers nothing

Gorbachev ended the 1989 coal strike by promising to deliver the goods to coal

communities. After the strike Gorbachev sent buyers to Western countries to snatch up foods and other consumer goods — TVs, radios, etc. But after a short buying spree the goods were gone, and the miners were left to fend for themselves again.

Gorbachev promised that *perestroika* would free up economic forces and produce a greater variety of goods. But after six years things have only gotten worse. In the first quarter of 1991 production actually declined by 10% while retail prices leapt up 123%. As a result, consumption declined by 6%.

Then, on April 2, came the hardest blow of all: across-the-board price hikes on the entire range of consumer goods. Prices generally doubled. Bread and meat went up some 300%.

The government offered wage increases to many workers to offset the April 2 price hikes, but they don't come close to making up for the jump in prices. And there's still very little to buy in the stores — little food, no toiletry articles, etc.

The price hikes, coming in the wake of widespread shortages, have been the last straw for ever larger sections of workers. This is what sparked the strike by workers across Byelorussia and elsewhere. ■

Upsurge in Byelorussia

The biggest strike rallies so far were in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia. On April 10 some 100,000 people clogged the streets to support striking workers and to denounce Gorbachev's price rises, which went into effect April 2. The protesters demanded the resignation of both the national government headed by Gorbachev and the government of Byelorussia. When their demands were not met, another rally was held on April 23. This was smaller, with about 20,000 people, but organizers vowed to continue their protests and to work toward an indefinite general strike.

Byelorussia has been considered a fairly quiet part of the country, and the size of the demonstrations there caught the government by surprise. But the workers here too are learning to take action, and resentment against the ruling authority is intensifying.

Striking workers are supported by other sections of the populace who have deep, long-term grievances against the government. One of the big unresolved issues in Byelorussia is Chernobyl. Five years after the nuclear plant's partial meltdown the government still has done little to assuage the effects of radiation poisoning, which affected many people in Minsk and throughout Byelorussia.

Another big issue in Byelorussia is housing the Soviet troops who are being withdrawn from Eastern Europe. The government has no jobs to offer returning soldiers, so they remain in the army. But the government has no place to put them either, so they are simply warehoused in Byelorussia, the Soviet republic closest to Eastern Europe. There they are maintained at the expense of local governments.

No saviors among the rulers

The rising strike movement in the Soviet Union shows the utter disgust of the workers for the phony "socialist" government headed by Gorbachev. In a worker-run society the coal miners and other workers would be the firmest supporters of the government, and active participants in it. The Russian revolution in 1917 had been made by the workers, and for a while the workers did rule there. But the leaders eventually turned

into bureaucrats, and capitalism was restored, although socialist labels were kept on. The workers have grown to hate the bureaucrats who have exploited them for decades.

The Soviet system went into deep crisis in the 1970's, and Gorbachev came on the scene in the mid-80's promising renewal. This was not a socialist rejuvenation as he postured, but transforming the Soviet Union from a state-capitalist system into a Western-style mixed economy, combining state-run enterprises and private capitalism.

Workers in the Soviet Union have become thoroughly disgusted by Gorbachev. His program has only landed the economy into chaos, and all the workers have to look forward to is unemployment, price hikes, and shortages. Thus the cry goes up across the Soviet Union from the workers: **Gorbachev must go!** This has become the main demand of many of the current strikes.

The workers' movement quite properly wants change from the present chaos. But the workers have many vague ideas about what to replace Gorbachev with. Unfortunately, many workers think that the liberal free-marketer Boris Yeltsin and his like-minded "democrats" offer an alternative. Yeltsin has demagogically claimed to support the strikes, and he rails against Gorbachev's blunders.

Yeltsin is not the workers' friend

But Yeltsin is a no-win answer. He stands for an even faster pace of the free-market capitalist economic reforms which are ruining the workers. And he has just joined Gorbachev in a new agreement on economic and political reform, an agreement which spells even worse days ahead for the workers. This agreement calls for the price hikes to continue and strikes to end; it holds out threats of force against the workers. Some type of deal has apparently been worked out for a coalition government that would bring Yeltsin and his allies into power at the federal level.

And thus today Yeltsin and his followers within the new workers' unions are already urging the strikers to return to work. But many workers quite justly cannot see what has changed. In many

Continued on page 11
See GORBACHEV

East German women pay a bitter price

German unification, which was supposed to bring heaven on earth to the workers of East Germany, is making a hell out of their lives. Every day brings higher prices and more unemployment.

But within the working class, some sections are picked out for special oppression and exploitation. This is a rule followed in all "free-market" economies. And it is being enforced today in East Germany. Racist attacks on immigrant workers are becoming more and more common. And women are being forced to bear an extra burden of oppression.

East Germany's old false communist (really state-capitalist) regime stifled the workers' political life and thinking and brought economic stagnation, but it did have a wide system of social programs that helped free up women for employment. This included day care and kindergartens, long-term maternity leave with employment guaranteed afterwards, and paid leave to care for sick children. All women had free access to contraception

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But now the "free market" governs all. And that means massive cutbacks in subsidized day care centers, maternity leave, etc. And East Germany will likely be forced to accept West Germany's reactionary laws banning abortions.

The cutbacks are making it more difficult for women to work. At the same time, employers are laying off women at a faster rate than men, since they consider women an economic risk factor. This is another of the "wonders" of the "free market" — driving women out of social life, forcing them to sit at home and wonder how they are going to make ends meet with soaring prices for rent, utilities, transport, etc.

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What comes next?

Bangladesh after the fall of General Ershad

Last December, a mass upsurge toppled the tyranny of General Ershad. What's been taking place in Bangladesh since? We are carrying a series of articles on the revolutionary movement in Bangladesh. They are written by a contributor to "The Workers' Advocate" who recently visited Dhaka.

DHAKA (SPRING 1991) - Elections for a new National Assembly took place at the end of February, and the fading remnants of the campaign are still visible everywhere. Every neighborhood is still covered with election slogans and posters.

In the newspapers the political parties are squabbling over whether the British-style parliamentary system or a U.S.-style presidency would be best to restore. In two decades of independence, Bangladesh has seen both models, and to the poor, working people in this land of 120 million, it hasn't made one bit of a difference. Meanwhile, the real business of bourgeois politics is being talked over in the drawing rooms of the rich, and it finds its way as rumors into the press: who will get what ministerial posts in the new government.

In the press coverage, the political debates, and in the election graffiti, one is struck by the absence of concrete alternatives. The establishment does not discuss real issues. And it's not as if there weren't serious concerns demanding urgent attention. You cannot walk the streets of this city, or elsewhere in Bangladesh, without confronting these issues.

The overwhelming majority still lives in the countryside, and the conditions of the rural masses is beyond desperate. More than three-quarters are virtually landless, and there isn't enough day labor for most to live on. Millions flood into the cities, but there isn't much work there either. The thousands who go in



Demonstrators defy police barricades during anti-Ershad upsurge

for pedaling rickshaws — for 12 hours a day, seven days a week — make about one dollar a day and quickly grow old and sick. Even those fortunate enough to be industrial laborers make far below what is needed to live on. You can see malnutrition all over. And the spiraling cost of living hits not just the toilers and poor, but even the middle class. Students graduate from colleges without much prospect of jobs.

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On March 26 the court loosened restrictions on confession obtained by torture or abuse. In 1967, the Supreme Court had ruled that any use of a coerced confession in a trial must taint the trial beyond repair. This ruling did not stop the beating of suspects, or provide for the punishment of police responsible for such abuse, but it prevented lower courts from openly using these confessions to convict the accused.

This time the court ruled 5-4 that presenting a confession obtained by duress or torture might well be regarded as a mere "harmless error," and a conviction at such a trial could be permitted to stand. The court only required that there be other evidence at the trial which could be declared adequate to make a guilty verdict seem reasonable. In such a case, even if the jury is swayed by the confession, the guilty verdict will stand.

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never suffer any penalty except the exclusion of coerced statements from use at a trial. The interest in the conservative majority in allowing trials with coerced statements obviously flows from the fact that they don't think such trials are rare exceptions. Their conclusion is not to call for steps against police lawlessness, but to loosen the rules of evidence.

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GORBACHEV Continued from page 10

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What comes next?

Bangladesh after the fall of General Ershad

Last December, a mass upsurge toppled the tyranny of General Ershad. What's been taking place in Bangladesh since? We are carrying a series of articles on the revolutionary movement in Bangladesh. They are written by a contributor to "The Workers' Advocate" who recently visited Dhaka.

DHAKA (SPRING 1991) - Elections for a new National Assembly took place at the end of February, and the fading remnants of the campaign are still visible everywhere. Every neighborhood is still covered with election slogans and posters.

In the newspapers the political parties are squabbling over whether the British-style parliamentary system or a U.S.-style presidency would be best to restore. In two decades of independence, Bangladesh has seen both models, and to the poor, working people in this land of 120 million, it hasn't made one bit of a difference. Meanwhile, the real business of bourgeois politics is being talked over in the drawing rooms of the rich, and it finds its way as rumors into the press: who will get what ministerial posts in the new government.

In the press coverage, the political debates, and in the election graffiti, one is struck by the absence of concrete alternatives. The establishment does not discuss real issues. And it's not as if there weren't serious concerns demanding urgent attention. You cannot walk the streets of this city, or elsewhere in Bangladesh, without confronting these issues.

The overwhelming majority still lives in the countryside, and the conditions of the rural masses is beyond desperate. More than three-quarters are virtually landless, and there isn't enough day labor for most to live on. Millions flood into the cities, but there isn't much work there either. The thousands who go in



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for pedaling rickshaws — for 12 hours a day, seven days a week — make about one dollar a day and quickly grow old and sick. Even those fortunate enough to be industrial laborers make far below what is needed to live on. You can see malnutrition all over. And the spiraling cost of living hits not just the toilers and poor, but even the middle class. Students graduate from colleges without much prospect of jobs.

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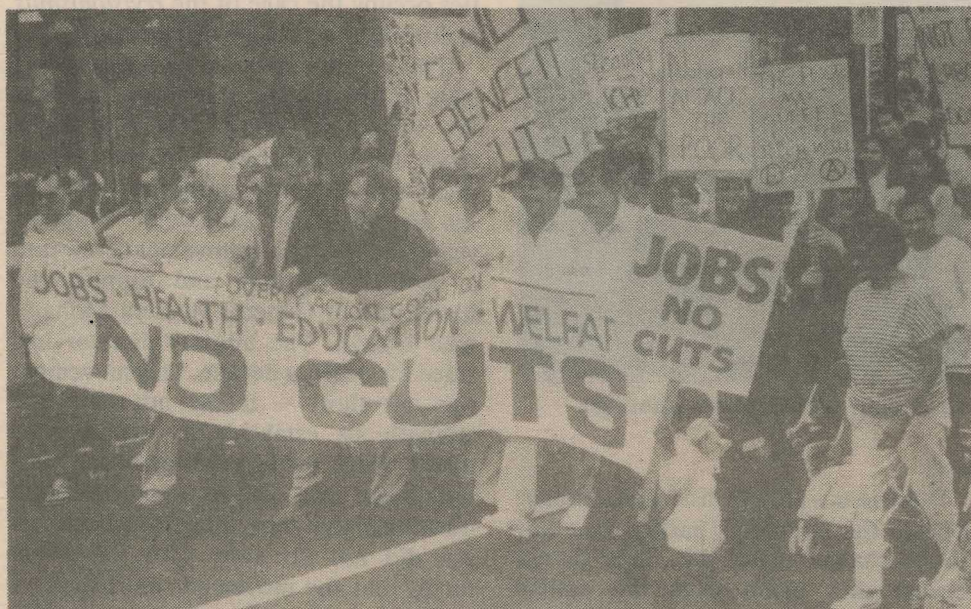
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The World in Struggle

New Zealand workers fired up against anti-union law



4,000 marched in Auckland, New Zealand against benefit cuts, Feb. 1

On April 4, some 100,000 New Zealand workers marched and rallied in the largest mass protests in a decade. They were protesting new anti-union legislation now before parliament. This also marked the beginning of a nationwide strike by the country's 50,000 school teachers.

10,000 workers marched in Auckland, the largest city, and burned in effigy members of the cabinet. In the capital city of Wellington some 5,000 workers demonstrated outside parliament. Government offices and many other enterprises were closed by one-day strikes.

The workers were angry with the proposed Employment Contracts Bill, which would abolish the closed shop, scrap all national contracts, and introduce individual or local contracts with no-strike clauses. Workers who refused to accept such contracts, and lost their jobs, would be ineligible for unemployment benefits. To add insult to injury, the government plans to pass and sign the bill on May 1, International Workers' Day.

Right-wing government follows in footsteps of Labor Party

This bill is just the latest attack on the masses by the right-wing government of the National Party, which came into office last fall. This year's budget, passed in December, included massive spending cuts. Benefits for the unemployed, the sick and disabled, people on pension, and for welfare recipients were cut by 25%. The country has since then seen many demonstrations and rallies by working people determined to beat back the

savage cutbacks.

Before last fall's election, the government was in the hands of the Labor Party, which pretended to rule in the name of the working class. But the Labor Party was following similar policies, slashing social programs and forcing thousands of workers into unemployment, which now stands at 13.5%. The rightist National Party took up where Labor left off, further decimating living standards and now directly attacking the labor unions.

Union leaders want to "debate, not defeat" the bill

The April 4 demonstrations were endorsed by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU). But this endorsement by the top union bureaucrats only came after mass meetings of workers across the country demanded action.

One would think that the union leaders might directly oppose the Employment Contracts Bill, since it directly attacks labor unions. But the bureaucrats are more concerned about keeping the workers passive than in defending their own unions. CTU President Ken Douglas told a parliamentary committee that the CTU wanted to "debate, not defeat the bill" and "recognized the need for change." He warned them though, that by pursuing the bill in this way, the government risked provoking the workers into a conflict that the bureaucrats might not be able to control.

Thus the labor hacks are organizing some protests, but at the same time they hope this will only let off steam. ■

Capitalism makes Latin American workers poorer

A recent report by the Inter-American Development Bank shows that the everyday "progress" of capitalism is ruining millions of workers throughout Latin America.

The report confirms that "Latin America and the Caribbean suffered economic contraction last year... Per capita consumption in the region declined, and attempts to keep government budgets in check have reduced state assistance for health, nutrition, education and housing." (*Financial Times*, April 8)

As if to confirm this, a cholera epi-

demic has broken out in Latin America. Starting in Peru, it is spreading rapidly to neighboring countries and claiming more victims. Cholera epidemics are entirely the product of inadequate sanitation and public services.

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There is no natural law which says this must remain so. The workers cannot be

satisfied with this system. Their struggle against austerity must raise up a call for a new society run in the interests of the working majority. ■

Yearnings for change across Africa

Africa has been raped many times over by European imperialism. Black Africa began to throw off the colonial yoke starting in the 1950's, but the end of colonialism did not bring liberation to the worker or peasant. Africa did take a step forward — but it was a step into the class struggle. European rule was replaced by the local African bourgeoisie — a small elite of businessmen, bureaucrats and military men — who rule in collaboration with European and American imperialism.

The class of money — both those in the African capitals and in the West — has kept the working people in continued bondage. While the people's resources and labor have continued to profit the few, their protests have been ruthlessly suppressed by dictatorships. Some ruled in the name of "socialism" while others sang the glories of capitalism — but everywhere in reality it was the savagery of capitalist oppression that was the rule.

During the 1980's, the African people became poorer still. But the masses are not sitting still. They are more and more in the streets, demanding democratic change. Tyranny must go and democracy must come, but if the working people are to lift themselves out of poverty, the end of tyranny can only be a first step — the rule of the capitalists and imperialist domination must end.

The first months of 1991 have seen upsurges of struggle in several countries:

Cameroon: A month of protest has rocked the one-party dictatorship of President Paul Biya in this Central African nation. There were demonstrations, barricades on roads, and transportation strikes. At least 30 people were reported shot to death. In the face of the mass outcry, Biya has reshuffled his cabinet, declared an amnesty for political prisoners, and promised multi-party elections by the end of the year.

Togo: On April 5, soldiers in this West African country shot and killed two youths who were trying to tear down a statue of General Gnassingbé Eyadema. Eyadema has ruled since a coup in 1967. Angry at this murder, 1,000 people

massed in the streets of Lome, the capital, on April 8 to demand the resignation of Gen. Eyadema. They threw up barricades and blocked streets. The next day soldiers tried to break through, attacking with tear gas and truncheons; but the workers fought back with stones and sharpened metal bars.

Mali: In March, the people of this country in the northwestern part of the continent succeeded in bringing an end to the rule of military dictator Moussa Traore. They had waged a powerful campaign of strikes and demonstrations, in which many Malians sacrificed their lives. A military regime has taken power, promising free elections. The working people have warned that they will resort to struggle if they are cheated.

Ethiopia: Armed rebels, who already control much of the northern part of this country including the entire province of Tigre, said at the end of April that they had captured Ambo, only 65 miles west of the capital Addis Ababa. The government of Mengistu Haile Mariam is in its worst crisis to date. Already it has lost much of Eritrea to the national movement there. Besides continuing its brutal civil wars, Mengistu is reshuffling his government. He is also hoping that U.S. imperialism, who he has been wooing to replace his past Soviet mentors, will somehow help pull his chestnuts out of the fire. ■



Celebrating fall of Mali tyrant

IN BRIEF

Turkish strike grounds airlines

Workers in Turkey are continuing their strike against the state-owned airline, THY. The 8,000 THY employees have been joined in their strike by 2,500 airport workers. They are demanding a pay raise of some 600%, needed to keep up with soaring inflation. The strike has grounded most of THY's flights. THY carries 80% of Turkey's domestic air traffic and 50% of its international traffic. ■

Auto workers strike in Brazil

Metal workers in the Sao Paulo region, Brazil's industrial heartland, began a strike April 15. The strike has idled auto plants owned by GM, Ford and VW. The workers are demanding a pay raise of over 200%, but even that will

not keep up with Brazil's skyrocketing cost of living. ■

Protest in Bolivia against U.S. troops

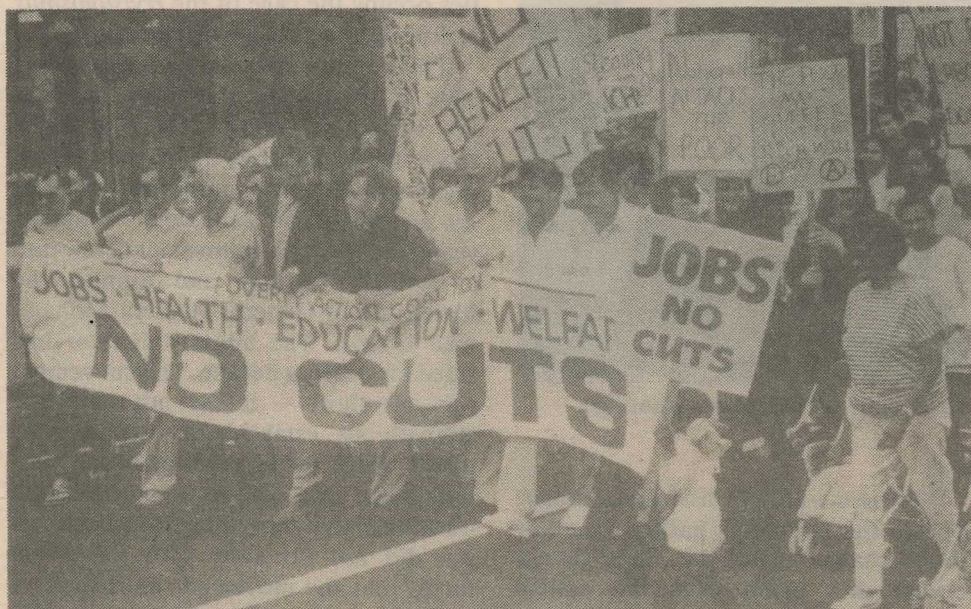
Workers in Bolivian state-owned enterprises walked out for one day on April 9 to protest the arrival of U.S. military personnel. President Jaime Paz Zamora has accepted the presence of scores of U.S. troops in Bolivia on the pretext of the "war on drugs." But workers denounced Zamora for kowtowing to Washington. The strike disrupted normal operations at airports, public schools, universities, and tin mines.

This protest came in the midst of flaming anti-Yanqui sentiment across Bolivia during the Persian Gulf war. After the middle of January, the slogan *Bush-Assassin* could be seen splashed across buildings on every block. ■



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Workers in Turkey are continuing their strike against the state-owned airline, THY. The 8,000 THY employees have been joined in their strike by 2,500 airport workers. They are demanding a pay raise of some 600%, needed to keep up with soaring inflation. The strike has grounded most of THY's flights. THY carries 80% of Turkey's domestic air traffic and 50% of its international traffic. ■

Auto workers strike in Brazil

Metal workers in the Sao Paulo region, Brazil's industrial heartland, began a strike April 15. The strike has idled auto plants owned by GM, Ford and VW. The workers are demanding a pay raise of over 200%, but even that will

not keep up with Brazil's skyrocketing cost of living. ■

Protest in Bolivia against U.S. troops

Workers in Bolivian state-owned enterprises walked out for one day on April 9 to protest the arrival of U.S. military personnel. President Jaime Paz Zamora has accepted the presence of scores of U.S. troops in Bolivia on the pretext of the "war on drugs." But workers denounced Zamora for kowtowing to Washington. The strike disrupted normal operations at airports, public schools, universities, and tin mines.

This protest came in the midst of flaming anti-Yanqui sentiment across Bolivia during the Persian Gulf war. After the middle of January, the slogan *Bush-Assassin* could be seen splashed across buildings on every block. ■